Canadian Library History Blog 2

Canadian Library History Blog is a convenient way to post information, book reviews, and comments about Canadian library history. Why have a blog on Canadian library history? There is a concern with contemporary library political, administrative, economic, and social issues that are relevant to library history. What influence does the study of the "past" have on the "present?" I try to show that there is a dual function that critical history performs: it helps us understand how past thoughts and actions were shaped and it provides us with a deeper awareness of present changes. In this context, past events, facts, trends, and people can be examined using historical methods and critical theories. As well, we can gain an understanding of explanations for causes and consequences, the use of narratives and evidence, and different versions of the past.

We are constantly reinterpreting history (as events and as historical accounts) using new concepts which emerge from uncovering more evidence and rethinking accepted facts in the light of new ideas and research methodology. "History" can be taken to mean what we accept happened in the past (or, conversely, what did not take place); it can also mean what is written as a result of continuous dialogue: what took place (events); why or how things happened (explanations); who was involved (personages); when did events occur (chronological dimension); and how ideas were formed and the influence they had on contemporaries.

Historical understanding helps us to comprehend cause-and-effect relationships and to avoid judging the past (and by extension "today") in terms of current norms and values. By looking at past library events and decisions in Ontario and across Canada we can develop alternative approaches to contemporary conditions based on a better awareness of the likely consequences. Historical memory is one of the keys to self-identity.

All posts published in ***LHTB 2*** were authored

and published by

Lorne D. Bruce in

Canadian Library History Blog

under a

Creative Commons License:

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives

4.0 International License

Reprinted by *Libraries Today*

November 2025

Internet blog posts are updated and revised periodically
and may differ from print versions

BLOG POSTS

2022–2017

Click on heading to follow link

Four Eastern Canadian Library Associations Convene at Montreal, April 1939

Special Libraries Go on the Air "Putting Knowledge to Work" in Montreal, 1936

Mabel Dunham: Librarianship as a Profession for Women, May 1921

Presidential Speech by Mary J.L. Black to the Ontario Library Association, Easter 1918

Alexander Calhoun Defends *The Grapes of Wrath* in Calgary, 1940

Marshall McLuhan Speaks to Ontario Librarians about Books and Reading, 1954–56

Two Canadian Films about Bookmobiles: *Roads to Reading* and *Journey from Zero*

The American Library Association's Neglected Canadian Conference in Vancouver, 1949

Libraries in the Post War Period by Charles Sanderson, 1944

The National Library of Canada, Its Eventual Character and Scope by the Canadian Library Association, August 1949

A National Library for Canada; A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada, December 1946

A National Library by Elizabeth Dafoe (1944)

Rural Canada Needs Libraries by Nora Bateson (1944)

Library Service for Canada Brief by the Canadian Library Council, 1944

Brantford 1904 Carnegie library

Brockville 1904 Carnegie library

D'obscurantisme et de Lumières: La Bibliothèque Publique au Québec by François Séguin (2016)

Two Fraser Valley films: *The Fraser Valley Public Library* (c. 1932) and *The Library on Wheels* (1945)

Ontario's Landmark Public Libraries Act, 1920

Les bibliothèques canadiennes, 1604-1960 by Antonio Drolet (1965)

Toronto's Free Library: Facts for the Citizens (1881) by John Taylor

Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books (1882) by John Hallam

Les Bibliothèques Populaires (1890) by Eugène Rouillard

The Library, the School and the Child (1917) by John Whitehall Emery

The Public Library: Its Place in Our Educational System (1912) by Edwin Austin Hardy

George Locke and the Toronto Public Library

Canadian Library Association Constitution, 1947

Short History of Ontario Library Boards and Trustees

Ontario Library Association Constitution, 1901

Toronto Public Library, 1842

Ontario Public Libraries in the Age of the Internet and the Digital Library

Regional Library Systems in Ontario, 1965–1985

The Modern Public Library Emerges in Ontario, 1920–1965: Brief Synopsis

Canadian Colonial Subscription Libraries, 1775-1850

Canadian Academic Libraries in the Postwar Period, 1945–60

Canadian Victorian Public Libraries before 1900

The British Columbia Free Libraries Act, 1891

The City of Saint John Free Public Library Act, 1883

The Ontario Free Libraries Act, 1882

The Province of Canada Act for Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes, 1851

Alexander Morris' Public Library Bill for Canada, 1866

Willliam Henry Boulton's 1852 Public Libraries Bill: Canadian Pre-Confederation Library Legislation

Tuesday, May 03, 2022

Four Eastern Canadian Library Associations Convene at Montreal, April 1939

Canadian Interprovincial Library Cooperation Begins in the 1930s

The scope for library collaboration across Canada broadened in the 1930s when more provincial library associations were formally organized in Quebec (1932), the Maritimes (1935), and Manitoba (1936). When these new groups joined the established library associations in Ontario (1900) and British Columbia library (1911), liaising more effectively on a west-west axis became possible. For three decades, Canadian librarians had looked to the south—to the American Library Association (ALA) or Pacific Northwest Library (PNLA)Association—to establish professional relationships. Although sporadic attempts to found a national library organization had floundered, library changes at the provincial level and the development of regional libraries were proving to be more successful. The Montreal Special Libraries Association and Library Association of Ottawa provided the groundwork for hosting larger conferences in large cities. Now, there was a firmer basis to move forward on broader issues.

After the economic slump of the early 1930s, North American librarianship was invigorated by the catchword "cooperation." When the ALA returned to Montreal in 1934 for a convention, it debated an American "National Plan" to improve access and mitigate local and state tax inequities. As well, the concept of a Canadian Library Council to represent libraries on a national basis was revived and a decision was made to re-establish an association of Maritime libraries. Three years later, British Columbia librarians and Americans in the PNLA mixed pleasure with business at Harrison Hot Springs in the Fraser Valley on Labour Day weekend, 1937. They saw first-hand the success of the Fraser Valley Regional Library, discussed the issue of trade unionism, and debated whether library collections should aim to be primarily "highbrow" or "lowbrow." Earlier in the same year, the OLA had met with other associations outside its traditional location, Toronto.

At the request of Ottawa's mayor and city library groups, the OLA, Quebec Library Association (QLA), Ottawa Library Association, the Montreal Special Libraries Association, and two delegates from the Maritime Library Institute held joint sessions at the Chateau Laurier on Victoria Day weekend, 24–25 May. This meeting was the first inter-provincial library gathering to be held in Canada. Dorothy Carlisle, OLA President 1936–37, and other officials hosted almost 250 delegates. A notable speaker on "Books, Readers, and Reviewers" was Martin Burell, the Librarian of Parliament since 1920, who was known as a politician and writer. Other federal officials expressed a desire to cooperate with libraries,

notably with the publication and distribution of government documents. A library "bonne entente" was established, and, subsequently, the OLA accepted an invitation by the QLA to Canada's metropolitan centre, Montreal, for 1939.

The Joint Conference of Canadian Librarians in Montreal, 1939

Joint Conference of the Ontario, Quebec and Montreal Special Library Associations and the Maritime Library Institute, Montreal, April 10–11, 1939

In April 1939, at Montreal's stately Windsor Hotel, a short time before the arrival of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the QLA and OLA joined with the Montreal Special Libraries Association and delegates from the Maritime Library Institute. Members from the recently formed Eastern Townships Library Association and the library group of the Professional Institute of Civil Service of Canada also attended. It was evident a European conflict was fast approaching. Poland and Britain had recently agreed to a treaty to forestall German aggression. The approaching Royal Visit to Newfoundland and Canada in May and June reminded Canadians of their British ties.

Over the Easter weekend, newspapers carried the story of Italian forces occupying Albania. The OLA's President, Kathleen (Moyer) Elliott, from Galt [now Cambridge], relied on Rudyard Kipling to inspire her audience: "If civilization is really slipping from us nothing is to be gained by stopping work to worry. If the values in which we believe are yet to triumph, then the very best we can do is to keep on keeping on." Kipling's exhortation to stay the course was wise guidance in spring 1939.

The Presidents of the Quebec Library Association and Montreal Special Libraries Association, Helen Haultain and Beatrice Howell, welcomed conference-goers on Monday. There were more than two hundred in attendance anticipating speeches and business meetings. The Montreal joint conference reprised many of the decade's library developments and presented initiatives for further activity. The speech by the new Director of Libraries in Nova Scotia, Nora Bateson (pictured above), was perhaps the first-day highlight. She spoke about her efforts to form regional libraries in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. For as little as thirty-five cents a taxpayer, good regional service could be organized in Nova Scotia. Bateson proposed spending this levy on books and services rather than buildings.

Another highlight was a meeting of children's librarians: Mary Falconer (Halifax), Donalda Putnam (Montreal), and Jean Thomson (Toronto) described services, especially storytelling, in their respective areas. Lillian Smith presided over this session and subsequently used the opportunity to form the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians (CACL). This new national association, regional in scope at first, was perhaps a response to Smith's recent observation in an ALA publication that a "sense of isolation" was a chief handicap felt by many children's librarians. The CACL met in Hamilton in October 1939 and spread westward during WWII to include librarians such as Amy Hutchinson (New Westminster) and Louise Riley (Calgary). It would become part of the Canadian Library Association in 1946.

Major A.L. Normandin, head of Public Printing and Stationery at Ottawa, discussed the governmental distribution and current listings of national publications. Many librarians, such as W.S Wallace at the University of Toronto, had been pressing the Dominion government to publish a monthly and annual checklist of Canadian federal publications to replace the unsatisfactory annual price list of in-print publications begun shortly before WWI. Normandin was sympathetic, but it would not be until 1953 that the Queen's Printer would publish daily and monthly check lists with annual cumulations.

Two McGill representatives, Philip J. Turner, School of Architecture, and Colonel Wilfrid J. Bovey, Director of Extramural Relations and Extension, addressed delegates on architecture and French-Canadian cultural achievements. Turner had overseen the remodelling of the Westmount Public Library in 1936. The colonel's presentation caught the attention of the Montreal press, especially *Le Devoir*: Bovey "rendu un mangnifique témoignage aux Canadiens français." *La Presse*, the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Montreal Daily Star* were also impressed with the McGill presentations.

Ernest C. Kyte, n.d.

Another address by Queen's University director, Ernest Cockburn Kyte, caught the most attention in English-speaking newspapers. His address was "A Canadian National Library," by now a familiar theme to librarians but not the general public. Kyte cited the need to collect Canadiana of all sorts but not overstate the need for a new building. He emphasized the urgency to begin collecting immediately. His comments attracted a supportive editorial in the *Montreal Daily Star*: "It is therefore to be hoped that the committee which has been appointed by the librarians to achieve a national institution will be successful in its efforts and that the public will heartily support the project. Self-respect on the part of Canadians should go far to assure this." An act to establish a national library came into force in 1953.

Conference Outcomes

One immediate positive news note at the conference highlighted successful efforts to achieve a Library Book Rate, a postal subsidy authorized by the Postmaster General.

Across Canada, sending books by mail was becoming commonplace and was regarded as an educational asset. The 1930–33 Commission of Enquiry led by John Ridington, George Locke, and Mary Black had supported the concept of a reduced postal rate for library books. British Columbia and Ontario librarians had begun to advocate for this rate in briefs and letters to the government. After the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association also supported reduced rates in 1938, the Ontario College of Education surveyed a hundred major libraries in early 1939. The survey revealed more than 300,000 books, excluding book packages, had been issued. Clearly, books-by-mail was becoming a substantial activity. Conference-goers were pleased to learn that a federal book rate would be introduced shortly. By the summer of 1939, a special rate came into effect. Books passing between libraries and their patrons within the same province would be assessed at 5¢ for the first pound and 1¢ for each additional pound. Canadian librarians and educators could toast a small victory.

The 1939 Canadian library conference in Montreal raised many subjects that would continue to resonate in the library community into future years: subsidized postal book rates, a national library in Ottawa, improved children's services, regional library systems, and better bibliographic control of government publications. The most significant step, of course, proposed by E.C. Kyte, was the formation of a Canadian Library Association which would continue annual conferences such as the successful one in Montreal. The Commission of Enquiry had supported the idea of a national association and a national library in the

depths of the Great Depression but believed conditions were not sufficient for their establishment. By the late 1930s, Canadian libraries had recovered from the worst effects of the global depression; however, wartime restrictions would force librarians and libraries to wait seven years longer for a Dominion-wide association to be formed.

Additional Blogs postings:

The 1930–33 Commission of Enquiry (2013)

Nora Bateson's regional efforts in the Maritimes (2014)

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Special Libraries Go on the Air "Putting Knowledge to Work" in Montreal, 1936

SPECIAL LIBRARIES TO MEET IN CITY

Convention Will Be Held at Mount Royal Hotel From June 16 to 19

PLANS ARE UNDER WAY

Miss Mary Jane Henderson of Sun Life Investment Library Is Chairman of Conference

Montreal Gazette, May 5, 1936

Special Libraries Organize in Montreal after 1932

The 28th annual conference of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) was held in Montreal at the Mount Royal Hotel on rue Peel from June 16–19, 1936. It was the third time SLA had come to Canada for its yearly convention, having joined with the American Library Association's conferences at Ottawa in 1912 and at Toronto in 1927. But on this occasion, SLA chose to convene on its own because a separate, very active SLA Chapter in Montreal had formed in May 1932 with 19 original members. At this time, Montreal was the business and financial capital of Canada. The new Chapter soon expanded rapidly to almost 70 members and to other libraries in regional centres: Ottawa, Toronto, and Winnipeg. The Chapter also had strong leaders, especially Mary Jane Henderson. Special librarianship quickly attracted several Canadians from libraries such as the Royal Bank of Canada, Sun Life Assurance Company, Canadian Industries, École Polytechnique, Montreal Board of Trade, McGill University, Forest Products Laboratory of Canada, the Insurance Institute of Montreal, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the National Research Library. The chapter's quarterly *Bulletin* first appeared in January 1935 edited by Beatrice V. Simon, a

McGill University medical librarian. Although the Depression era still lingered, it was a vibrant time of growth for Canadian special librarians.

Mary Jane Henderson (BA, Queen's University, 1925; BLS, Pratt Institute School of Library Science, 1926) was the first president of the Montreal Chapter. Henderson was an accomplished organizer who was inducted into the Special Libraries Association Hall of Fame in 1964 after her retirement. She made the host arrangements and organized a successful program under the theme, "Putting Knowledge to Work," for the 1936 conference expected to attract about 200–300 people. The Mount Royal Hotel (today a renovated shopping mall) served as the conference headquarters. Henderson coordinated the work of four essential committees: programs, luncheons and banquet, local arrangements, and advance publicity. She also helped enlist prominent speakers. For the Friday general session. Brooke Claxton, a distinguished Montreal lawyer, addressed SLA delegates on the question of peace and war: "I thought it would be interesting for us, for a time, to see if we have any common reaction to that fear of war which everyone throughout the world shares today." Claxton would eventually rise in political ranks to become Canada's Minister of National Defence in 1946. B.K. Sandwell, the liberal-minded editor of *Saturday Night* published in Toronto, echoed the theme of Anglo-American relations. He spoke during a luncheon to three SLA groups on the issue of cross-border "trade" in ideas noting the impact of Andrew Carnegie and the Rockefeller Foundation on Canadian culture. Two prominent McGill men, Sir Andrew MacPhail and Lt.-Colonel Wilfrid Bovey, spoke at the evening banquet on Thursday. MacPhail entertained his audience regarding his views on the gradual transition in library work: the business of a special librarian, he concluded, was not to accumulate books but to select and "selection is the main business of art, of the artist, and of the genius, which a librarian must be."

A notable conference highlight featured three radio talks carried by the CBC network in eastern Canada at 6:15 p.m. on three weeknight evenings. Radio broadcasts by librarians were not innovative, but SLA's reach on the CBC spanned thirteen stations from Toronto to Halifax and Charlottetown was a Canadian first. The SLA President, William F. Jacobs, General Electric, opened with an introduction to special libraries.

We special librarians have in our files such diversified material as newspaper clippings, pamphlets, magazines, telephone directories, corporation directories, yearbooks, government documents, advertisements, art prints, and so on. To us, all this is knowledge — knowledge needed by the business man, the research worker or the specialist in his profession. And it is our job to see that this knowledge is usefully applied.

He was followed by Eleanor Cavanaugh, librarian at Standard Statistics Co., New York City, who explained how a business could profit from its own library

resources. After offering a few examples, she stated, “The special librarian has, in the past twenty-five years, justified the judgment of those executives who realized the need of some organized and centralized fact-finding department within their own organization.” Angus Fletcher, Director of the British Library of Information in New York, delivered the final radio session devoted to “Putting Government Documents to Work.” The British Library in New York had a unique function in the SLA fellowship which was populated mostly by business concerns. This library was part of a growing Anglo-American culture spanning the Atlantic.

“It was established in the year 1920 and attached to the British Consulate-General in the city of New York. Its task is to serve the general public as a library of authoritative information on British affairs, and it is also the office to which appropriate questions are referred by the British Embassy and Consulates in the United States.”

Delegates concluded the convention on Friday afternoon with a short tour and a social tea at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club, hosted by the city of Montreal, before returning home. By all accounts, especially in newspapers, the SLA’s annual meeting was a success. The host chapter had enlisted the aid of McGill University, the CBC, the Quebec Library Association, municipal and provincial officials to bolster their confidence. They were justly proud of hosting SLA and realizing the Montreal chapter had attained the seventh largest membership in just four years! This organizational experience would stand the chapter in good stead in the prewar years. The group would participate in two more important Canadian inter-provincial library conferences held in Ottawa in 1937 and Montreal in 1939 by offering organization assistance and speakers to highlight their respective views. Its example encouraged special librarians in Toronto to form their own chapter in 1940 and, eventually, host SLA’s annual conference there in 1952.

Further reading:

Selected speeches, the conference program, three radio broadcasts, and various SLA reports are available in the digitized issue of *Special Libraries* for July-August 1936.

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Mabel Dunham: Librarianship as a Profession for Women, May 1921

At the end of her year as president of the Ontario Library Association in March 1921, B. Mabel Dunham, the chief librarian of the Kitchener Public Library since 1908, selected a topic of major importance at the OLA's twenty-first meeting: "Library Work as a Profession for Women." For the most part, press reports shortened the topic by omitting "for Women" but briefly reported her main remarks. Library journals, such as *Public Libraries*, which covered the meeting in its May issue, had little to say about Dunham's speech. It reported, "Miss Dunham's paper was a very able plea for library work as a means of service to the community and development of one's highest personality." The *Library Journal* reported that "Miss Dunham ranks library work as one of the high callings for women, inasmuch as it presents an opportunity for service to the community and for building up one's own character and personality." The synopsis in the May issue of the *Ontario Library Review* observed that she "upheld the high ideals of our calling." An experienced librarian, Marjorie Jarvis, from Toronto's reference library, provided the most detail for the *Review*:

> *She spoke of the present lack of standards, of positions given to local applicants instead of trained workers, of the indifference of many library boards, who consider a board meeting a social event. Against this she set the opportunities library work afford both of self-education and then of wide influence, the openings for originality and initiative. These she pointed out were attractive to the college graduate who felt her responsibility for service and had the trained mind and wide mental outlook which were necessary for one who wished to do 'pioneer work in a new educational field.'*

Mabel Dunham Addresses the Issue of Women in Librarianship in Ontario

If Mabel Dunham hoped to arouse vigorous discussion at the Association, she would not be entirely satisfied. There had been many articles on professionalism in libraries and women's entry into librarianship for three decades, especially in the United States. However, she felt it necessary to address these issues in the current postwar era when new expectations were being formed about Canadian society in the 1920s.

Mabel Dunham introduced her topic by outlining women's societal progress before linking professional work in libraries with young female university graduates. Her viewpoint took for granted whiteness and middle-class values in

the field of library work for professionally minded women—the "few favored ones." She did not address the position of library assistants or women, such as the Bishop Strachan School graduate Marjorie Jarvis, who relied on lesser educational qualifications and experience to gain a reputation in libraries. Excerpts from her speech, which resides at the Archives of Ontario in the Ontario Library Association fonds on microfilm holdings MS-907, follow.

"These are days when women are filling a much great place in public life in Canada than ever before. Half a century ago it was a universally-accepted belief that women's sphere was in the home, but now the most confirmed woman-hater is discreetly silent, though he sees women engaged in all manner of competitions once sacred to the lords of creation. Women work in our factories, our stores, our banks; they are to be found in medicine, in law and in the applied sciences. They serve on our municipal boards, on our provincial commissions and they have invaded the unholy realm of politics. They have, perhaps as a result of the nature of their work in the world war, come to realize that, as citizens, it is their native right and also their duty not to complete with men as rivals but to cooperate with them in the common task of making Canada a better place for men and women and little children to live in.

"Unfortunately, the great majority of women of Canada are allowed to begin the battle of life with but very little training. When they have passed through the elementary schools at the age of fourteen or fifteen, they enter industrial or domestic, or commercial life. Naturally enough, they are fit for little else than manual labor. They give themselves up to the monotony of a life of routine and rarely rise above it. Some are fortunate enough to be able to attend the secondary schools and at eighteen or thereabouts they find themselves called upon to choose among the callings that are open to women of their training. A very few favored ones there are for whom the choice of a profession is postponed until after they have graduated from the university.

"Canadian women are availing themselves of the advantage of higher education and year by year an increasing number of young women graduate from our universities. Eagerly they have been looking from their cloistered windows into the busy world and trying to find a place in it for themselves. Not one of them but hopes 'to serve the present age,' as to live and work among people of education and refinement, to be in a position to continue her own education, and, withal, to earn at least a competence. These are the requisites of a happy life.

"Prominent among the professions that come up for consideration when a girl is choosing her vocation in life is Library work. She has learned to love the college library, its corridors, its books, its very silences. She has proved it to be a friend in need and a very present help in time of trouble. She remembers that it is more blessed to give than to receive and she pictures herself in a librarian's chair, doing for others what others have done for her. ... To be in a position to direct

the reading and thinking of a whole community is a work that comes to her as a challenge. To be able at the same time to continue her own education amid the most pleasant surroundings she regards as a privilege.

"It is a profession that is eminently suited to women. If numbers prove anything, it is, like teaching, a profession that men use as a stepping-stone to other professions but this cannot be said of the men engaged in library work in Canada. They have drifted into the profession from many other walks in life and they hold their positions, like our judges, for life and good conduct. They are for the most part managers of large libraries and are surrounded by a corps of assistants who are either trained or experienced workers in the various departments of library service. There are a few women who have shown themselves not only capable managers of large libraries but also conversant with the work of every department, and through the country the majority of workers holding important library posts are women.

Mabel Dunham, n.d. (c. 1920)

"But, although there are good positions in library work in Canada, there are few openings and advancement in the profession is slow and uncertain. There are too many instances of University women who have taken library courses but who have failed to get a footing in the library world. When vacancies occur, preference is usually given to local applicants without any special regard for educational or professional qualifications. That there are pecuniary considerations back of these conditions I will not deny. Library appointments, when once made, are more or less permanent. Year after year goes by and no

questions are raised as to the competency of the person appointed, no inquiry is made into the measure of her development intellectually and professionally, an no interest is shown in the reputation of the Library either locally or provincially. Too many librarians, whether they realize it or not, are merely marking time. The tragedy of it is that nobody seems to care so long as they keep off other people's corns. This fact cannot be gainsaid, the majority of women engaged in library work in Canada began in their own home town and have not departed from it.

"The result of this practice has been that library work, in Ontario at least, is called a profession by courtesy only. To state that a woman is a librarian means nothing at all. It means something to be called a teacher, a doctor, a nurse, or a lawyer. Everyone knows without being told that these persons have successfully passed certain examinations, both academic and professional. There are certain standards to which they must have attained. ... But in library work there are no such standards set. For years the bars have been down to all comers and, naturally enough, a number of untrained people have wandered in. These have unintentionally though non the less effectively, kept low the status of library work as a profession.

"The librarian has so much to do with her Library Board that she is wise if she considers well, before accepting an appointment, whether or not she can work with them. It is not always an easy task to please nine men with nine different minds, and the presence of women on the Board may accentual the difficulty.

"But along with the limitations and weaknesses of library work as a profession there are many compensations. It has, indeed, very much to commend it as a profession for earnest, trained women.

"Certainly it is educational work and it is only for the ignorant who despise education. Every thoughtful man and woman knows that all true education has for its object the formation of character, and, after all, character is the one thing in all that really matters. The Public Library is or should be an integral part of public education. By all the rules of logic it is evident that library work is a holy service.

"Leisure is not only a test of character but, and this means more to the educationalists, it furnishes a life-long opportunity to develop and mould character. For this reason it is sacred.

"The Public Library is the one institution that has in view the education and culture of the people by their own volition during their periods of leisure. ... People come and read because they love to read or because they are in need of help which the Library can afford. ... The librarian meets, under the most pleasant conditions, people whom she would never meet through any school, or club, or office, or church, people of all ages, all races, and all creeds. She creates a

municipal home where all may meet as equals by the common right of citizenship. ... She becomes a friend and co-worker with the teachers, the preachers and all others who have at heart the public weal and the library under her management becomes a mighty social factor in the community.

"Another boon library work has to offer, namely the priceless privilege of showing initiative and originality. ... The librarian who would be worthy of the profession she has chosen must be awake and resourceful. There is no room for automatons in library work, for it is a pioneer effort in a relatively new educational field and only those can follow the plough and dig well the furrows who know the rules and are willing to use both hands.

"It is to equip boys and girls with the keys that will open the doors to great storehouses of literature that their father knew not of. It is to create within them such interests and ambitions as will help them to avoid many of the pitfalls of life into which boys and girls of an earlier generation have fallen. It is, in short, to raise the type of men and women of the Canada of to-morrow.

"But no woman, however brilliant and earnest, should undertake library work without some measure of professional training. ... A librarian must learn to know books by their index and contents pages, to use them not only as sources of information but as tools to guide her to information in other books. She must know how to select books wisely and how to buy them economically. She must familiarize herself with systems of classification and methods of cataloguing. She should know what equipment is necessary and where to procure it most advantageously. She must understand methods in staff and budget management and she must be able to think of things so automatically that she will not waste her energies on the mere machinery of library work and run the risk of losing sight of the real meaning and object behind all her work.

"The pity of it is that so many of us librarians of experience seem to be people of circumscribed vision. ... There is a verse somewhere in the Bible which reads: 'Where there is no vision the people perish.' I trust that I may not some day be found guilty of distorting or misapplying scripture if I suggest that it may have some bearing on the library situation in the Province of Ontario in this our day of grace."

Mabel Dunham's comments speak to an emerging profession in Ontario after the Great War. She was wholeheartedly in favour of providing advanced library training for young women seeking a professional career. At the same time, she cautioned that librarianship was circumscribed by few openings, beset by uncertain advancement, and impeded by some male directors who regarded their board tenure as a right. Library work is a "holy service," Dunham declared when she sought to encourage the young female university graduate to better her career opportunities and develop her character. The 1920s would witness the

establishment of graduate library education at the University of Toronto and McGill University and the increase of women as administrators in public libraries in Ontario.

Further reading:

Mabel Dunham's biography is at Wikipedia and in another blog on the Library History Today website.

Saturday, January 22, 2022

Presidential Speech by Mary J.L. Black to the Ontario Library Association, Easter 1918

Mary J.L. Black becomes President of the Ontario Library Association 1917–18

On April 10, 1917, Mary J.L. Black was elected president of the Ontario Library Association (OLA). She was the first female to hold this position. In the first part of the twentieth century, presidential positions for women in Anglo-American library associations were unusual. Theresa Elmendorf was elected president of the American Library Association in 1911, followed by Mary Wright Plummer in 1915. It was not until half a century later, in 1966, that the Library Association (UK) elected Lorna Paulin president. Mary Black and Helen Gordon Stewart, who was elected president of the British Columbia Library Association in September 1917, were the first women to break the presidential gender barrier in Canadian librarianship. Their executive offices came in the same year that women over the age of 21 who were born or naturalized British subjects became legally eligible to vote in provincial elections. Black mentioned this in passing when she accepted her position:

> "I recognize also that the selection is not an entirely personal one. I realize, in the first place as the first woman President of this Association, that the Association is making a very great innovation. I would not like to say a step in advance but a wonderful innovation that I think could only have been introduced in this great democratic country of Ontario. Here we have obtained the suffrage without working or even asking for it. We did not have to go out and create strife and disorder in order to gain this great privilege."

Her brief remarks were well received in general, but one wonders whether some in her audience felt she had neglected to praise the strenuous effort made by the suffragette movement to achieve this right. Attaining the right to vote was no easy task, for it was not until the following year, on May 24, 1918, that women who were citizens (nominally British subjects) became eligible to vote federally on the same terms as men. Although Black was actively engaged with women's organizations, such as the Women's Canadian Club and Girl Guides, she was satisfied with the position that women were on an equal standing with men. She did not emphasize any feminine skills that may have advantaged women in providing library service.

Presidential Address by Mary Black

Mary J.L. Black, c.1918

Mary Black was a captivating speaker and a progressive librarian who championed the idea of public service during her lengthy career as chief librarian of the Fort William Public Library from 1909 to 1937. Her brief talks at the OLA annual meetings in Toronto and her performance as a librarian had rapidly gained her the respect of her colleagues. By 1917, she was invited to give a lecture on libraries to students at the Department of Education's library school. Black was eager to rectify the conventional conservative, bookish images of the library and librarians when the Association met at the Public Reference Library on College Street in Toronto. This purpose formed the core of her Easter presidential speech on April 1, 1918, when Black used a humorous theme to demolish what she termed "popular fallacies" held about libraries and librarians. She began in a serious tone because the war in Europe was still raging—its conclusion was still an unknown. She asked a series of questions: "Our Motto for our convention this year is 'Service.' It is perhaps a rather hackneyed one, but how could we get away from the choice? What else is there for us to think about, in this year of Grace, 1918, when all the rest of the civilized world is thinking of nothing else? What explanation have we for being where we are? … What can we as librarians do to show that we too are serving? Is the task in which we are engaged, be it great or small, an essential one?"

Her answer followed the wartime public mood that the post-war would be the time for new beginnings. "Now, however, times have changed. The psychological moment for aggressive construction has arrived, and one of the first difficulties that present itself is the accumulation of false impressions of the library and its aims, to be found both among the general public, and many actual library workers, which stands as a barrier to our progress. As is often the case with popular fallacies, many of these have a shade of truth in them, but not a sufficient amount to make their influence other than prejudicial to the library."

What were these popular misconceptions that Mary Black sought to negate? She gave an energetic address about several major fallacies held by the public, by library workers, and by both that she felt needed to be thoughtfully considered and remedied.

• — "anyone who works in a library is a librarian." She denied getting a salary or passing examinations qualified one to be a librarian. Instead, she felt individuals needed to possess the "spirit of librarianship," a characteristic that she developed

in stages in her talk. Black believed librarianship was in a maturation stage; its spirit consisted of the service ethic, knowledge of people, book expertise, library training, and business acumen.

• — the "librarian is almost omniscient, and if she is not, then she should be." She responded by saying everyone had intellectual limitations and that it was the librarian's duty to know where to find information, not to be a walking encyclopedia. To be successful, the librarian had to have the "personal touch" and demonstrate "heart and soul" rather than the impressive intellectual strength which Black humorously associated with the era of "bluestockings."

• — "Many people view the desirability of the library being in the town, in much the same way as that the church which is never entered is considered. Its general influence is good, and it is a very desirable ornament ...." She said creating public awareness about the library as a community resource was an important step in promoting service. Libraries had to cater to all tastes: "If a library is not an embodiment of democracy and universal in its service, it is not fulfilling its functions. Another function was to show people that they own the library and that "if they do not see what they want, it is their right to ask for it." Unfortunately, she felt too few librarians could explain to readers the arrangement of books and their connection with a catalogue.

• — the librarians "failure to understand, that they are only employees of the public." A supercilious tone and standing over readers to protect books was not a proper way to cultivate the public's trust. Understanding the range of citizens' needs and engaging people directly was a primary quality.

• — the tendency "librarians take their work too seriously; that the library is only a business concern, in which they are engaged to give a definite service, for a wage." Wrong, of course! "The library employee who does not experience the pleasure of wanting to do work for which she knows she will never be paid, is very foolish to remain in it. Librarianship is undoubtedly a profession, even though a very immature one, and the person who thinks differently is holding a fallacy, the dissemination of which will do great harm." She recommended terminating library workers who could not grasp this essential attribute.

• — "it does not do us any injury for them [librarians] to write humorous articles for general publication taking as their topic, the foibles and limitations of librarians, and the absurdity of many of our beliefs." Wrong, again. There is a fine line to humour: she asked if library workers did not take their work seriously, who would?

• — "Is there not, however, a very general fallacy held by us, that in having defined our work, we have accomplished it?" She believed carrying the right

book to the right reader was the fundamental mission of the public library. Yet, more could be done: “our library unit is too confined, and we must have it changed from the municipality to the township, county, or district, in order to really reach the people of the province.” She realized Ontario’s public library system in 1918 had a narrow reach. “When are we going to get to work and show the people of Ontario that the mistakes and errors of the past have not been in vain, but having learned our lesson, we are able now to go ahead, with a willing and cheery heart, confident that ways and means will be found for the library's fullest development?” It was a call to action.

Mary Black, n.d.

Mary Black briefly mentioned, but did not elaborate, on other popular public fallacies such as the failure to see that library was a non-sectarian institution, that the library catered to “the supposed ignorance and innocence of the high school girl,” or that the library censored items or had no right to exclude anything in its collection. She said these false impressions would take her an entire evening to discuss, not a short half-hour speech. The President was more concerned about emphasizing the importance of public service. “We too do serve!” should be a rallying cry for library workers across the province, especially during wartime. During her presidential year, she spoke at small gatherings to promote libraries.

During her lengthy career, Mary Black tirelessly promoted the service ethic and work with immigrants in public libraries. The reputation of the Fort William Public Library grew throughout the 1920s and 1930s. At the outset of the 1930, she served as one of the three Canadian commissioners for the American Library Association’s survey, *Libraries in Canada: A Study of Library Conditions and Needs*, published in 1933. She retired, in 1937, due to ill health and died in Vancouver on 4 January 1939.

Further reading:

Mary Black’s entire speech can be viewed on the Internet Archive of books for the Ontario Library Association *Proceedings* and also in the May 1918 issue of *Public Libraries*.

Read Mary Black’s biography in the Canadian Dictionary of Biography authored by Brent Scollie.

Sunday, January 16, 2022

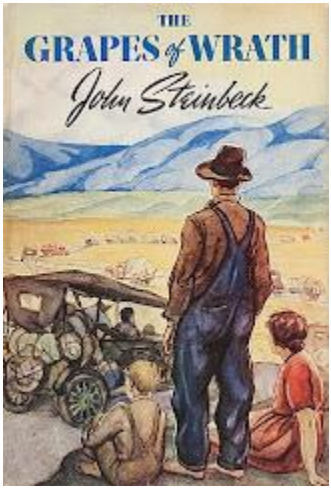
Alexander Calhoun Defends *The Grapes of Wrath* in Calgary, 1940

> "The problem of obscenity in books is undoubtedly a very thorny one for librarians. Possibly the only confident statement one dare make on the subject is that there has been in the last generation a marked increase of tolerance on the part of the public toward obscenity in literature. In the main, I think, this is a sign of progress." — Alexander Calhoun, March 16, 1940, *Calgary Herald*.

When the Viking Press published John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, it was generally greeted with critical acclaim in North America. Steinbeck's masterful story followed the fictional Joad family's trek to the promised land of California and their struggles once heartbreaking reality shattered their hopeful vision. The novel quickly reached the top of bestseller lists. Its renown gained Steinbeck a Pulitzer Prize for Novels and a National Book Award for Fiction within a year. The 1940 movie version starring Henry Fonda was equally successful at box offices.

Canadian customs officials did not prohibit the importation of the novel into Canada. It was legally published and available for sale. But the novel was also greeted by many opponents who felt Steinbeck employed obscene/foul language, described overt sexual affairs, indulged in religious profanity, and sympathized with dangerous socialist/communist ideas. Some libraries in the United States, such as Buffalo, refused to purchase it; there were a few book burning as well. In Toronto, there were complaints from library patrons that *The Grapes of Wrath* was not available even a year later, in early 1940. The Chief Librarian, Charles Sanderson, told the *Toronto Star* that it was one of the books that the library would not buy. Higher literary standards—the highbrow culture of exclusion—often prevailed among library selectors and cautious library administrators.

However, one library director in Canada, Alexander Calhoun at Calgary Public Library, defended Steinbeck's work and made a case for its selection and retention in libraries. Calhoun had tentatively decided not to order it when the first reviews came out in early 1939. The American Library Association's review publication, *Booklist*, had called attention to Steinbeck's use of "natural language" and recommended the book be read prior to purchase. Later in the year, *Booklist* published Helen E. Haines' article "Values of Fiction" which praised Steinbeck's novel. She was a reputable American library educator whose judgements were noteworthy. Calhoun decided to read the novel; then he placed an order for the Calgary library.



Faced in early March 1940 with a complaint by a Calgary city alderman, Hedley C. Chauncey, Calhoun explained his rationale in an opinion piece in *Calgary Herald*: "My own opinion is that it is so significant as a social document that no library worth of the name should be without a copy." He said that a few libraries had banned *Anthony Adverse* by Hervey Allen, although it contained passages of a pornographic nature more shocking than anything in *Grapes*. He pointed to an American judge's decision in 1933 to lift the ban on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. This important ruling clarified a few matters about what could be judged pornographic:

(1) what was the author's intention: to write a pornographic book?
(2) a book should be judged as a whole, not by any of its parts or excerpts;
(3) the standard of reference for obscenity should be for a typical adult, not minors;
(4) "dirty," realistic language is not necessarily pornographic or obscene when taken in a broader context of the book.

This landmark decision eventually opened the door for the publication of serious works of literature that used coarse language or depicted sexual subjects.

Calhoun explained that his own judgement was only one part that formed his decision. He asked his staff to read the book, and he also looked into the opinion of Calgary library readers. All eleven staff reported they favoured the book's retention. Calhoun mentioned there had been no demands from readers to have the book removed from library shelves by its many readers. And he had listened to the NBC Network's radio talk show, America's Town Meeting of the Air program, "What should America do for the Joads?" Calgary's library director, along with millions, had tuned in to hear this program on March 7th. He felt the show likely would lead to further investigation of social problems raised in the book by Steinbeck. He closed his opinion piece by commenting that "no minor will be given the book to read without the clear approval of his parents." His assessment countered the argument that *Grapes* posed a threat to taint younger teenage minds. Nonetheless, it was a conservative view. Just a few years later, at the end of WW 2, an Ontario teacher, Mary Campbell at Harbord Collegiate Institute, Toronto, expressed her view at a librarians' discussion group that, "*The Grapes of Wrath* is a realistic book for senior students. I recommend it for the validity of period and social situation. The profanity is incidental. We should have confidence in our standards. We shouldn't consider narrow-minded opinions."

The controversy over *The Grapes of Wrath* raised the issues of censorship and intellectual freedom for public librarians and trustees at a time authoritarian regimes threatened democratic nations. In June 1939, at San Francisco, the American Library Association issued a brief three-point "Library's Bill of Rights." It stated libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view. Library selections should not be subject to the influence of race, nationality, or the writers' political or religious views. Further, library meeting space should be made available to all community groups on equal terms regardless of their beliefs or affiliation. In Canada, the short ALA statement was published in the *British Columbia Library Association Bulletin* in November 1939 without comment. Indeed, intellectual freedom would remain a subterranean issue in Canadian libraries until the Cold War commenced.

Further Reading:

"Calgary Librarian's Case for the Joads." *Calgary Herald*, Saturday, March 16, 1940, p. 30.

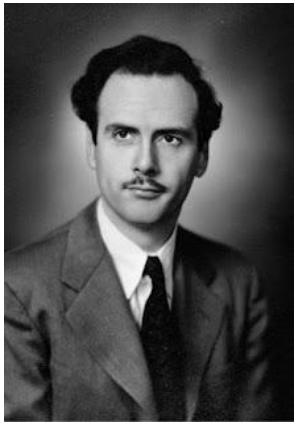
Listen to *RadioEchoes.com* archive recording of the Town Meeting of the Air panel discussion on the social issues raised by Steinbeck that Calhoun referenced [approx. one hour].

Alexander Calhoun's biography at Ex Libris Association.

Wednesday, January 05, 2022

Marshall McLuhan Speaks to Ontario Librarians about Books and Reading, 1954–56

Herbert Marshall McLuhan, 1945



By the mid–1950s, prominent speakers had become a fixture at Ontario Library Association (OLA) annual conferences. Such was the case in mid-May 1956 when the OLA met at Oshawa's new McLaughlin Library, which had opened in 1954. This OLA conference was shortened to two days because the Canadian Library Association would meet at Niagara Falls in June. Nevertheless, four hundred and twenty-five persons registered; it was one of the best attended conferences to date. A notable attraction was an emerging University of Toronto professor at St. Michael's College, Marshall McLuhan. He addressed delegates about "The Future of the Book" at a luncheon on May 16th at the St. Andrew's United Church in downtown Oshawa.

Marshall McLuhan Addresses Librarians about the Future of the Book in Oshawa, 1956

McLuhan had found an American firm, Vanguard Press, to publish *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* in 1951. In *The Bride*, he analyzed popular printed resources (e.g., comic strips or visual images in magazine/newspaper advertisements) as agents of social communication and public persuasion rather than transmitters of content. He theorized that readers typically perceived messaging so casually that they failed to notice how it influenced their thinking about lifestyles and social norms. McLuhan believed the form of communication was a very significant force that shaped public awareness because it merged technology and sexual themes in persuasive way, hence the title of his book. *The Bride's* short chapters could be read in any order—a method that allowed McLuhan's readers to concentrate on one topic or skip to another section, much like dialing a radio to find a good program.

The St. Michael's college professor spoke to librarians about his interpretations of the effect of movies and radio on books. Now television had become another challenge. These electronic media engaged the public in new, different ways; for example, the outcome of elections was less predictable now. But McLuhan felt the future of the book was assured; in fact, every type of media enriched books. All media, including books, are the means of translating one kind of experience

into another. Books were an early stage of the mechanization of the written word. Now, television and radio were adopting an electronic mode of operation or production of words. Books allowed readers, in a linear fashion, to delve deeper into knowledge and presented a greater diversity of subjects. Nonetheless, McLuhan believed the public's perception of the electronification of information was becoming as important in transmitting knowledge through printed media.

R.H. King Collegiate library, 1954

McLuhan Speaks to Ontario School Librarians about Electronic Media in Toronto, 1954

McLuhan's message was well received at a time when libraries and educators were grappling with the growth of mass media, primarily television and radio, which reached into homes across the nation. In their own right, libraries were important sources of print medium that conveyed detailed information. Indeed, it was the second time the theorist spoke to Ontario librarians in less than two years. The School and Intermediate Libraries Section of OLA invited him to its meeting at the R.H. King Collegiate Institute in Scarborough on Saturday afternoon October 30th, 1954. Margaret Scott was the head librarian at the R.H. King's library, which was considered a comfortable, modern setting for students. She would later become an associate professor of school librarianship at the University of Toronto Library School. Scott was an active member of the School and Intermediate Libraries section, which dated back to the 1920s to annual OLA 'round tables' of librarians and teachers interested in the reading and use of books by young adults. The OLA had formalized this section in 1935 to represent librarians in secondary schools and public librarians interested in young adult reading. Librarians believed libraries to be places where 'good' books could be

found to counter the effect of mass-produced 'bad' books that teens could purchase at local retailers or exchange among themselves.

"The Hazards of Reading" formed the theme of McLuhan's afternoon session at R.H. King. Despite the spread of electronic mass media in the 20th century, he remained an advocate for book culture. When he asked, "What is the essential core of Book-Culture that is worth preserving?" he was suggesting that a 'core library' could be assembled to preserve and make accessible humankind's knowledge. An informed personal perspective was necessary to remedy the ill effects of standardized advertising and messaging presented in various mass media. Book reading had an effect quite different from the competing media. He made the interesting observation that students come to the classroom "loaded with facts." The need was not to supply more facts but to help them articulate what they already knew—to help them orient themselves in the midst of the conflicting cultural media surrounding them. McLuhan emphasized the need to study the impact of the new media of communication on the older book culture. His post-presentation comments raised many interesting points; however, questions had to be cut short before the closing school hour.

Marshall McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride*

McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride* did not reach the bestseller lists or sweep through the halls of academia. Nor did libraries undertake to assemble 'core' collections to represent humankind's knowledge for their clientele. Later, especially in the 1960s, McLuhan achieved celebrity status with a series of popular books: his phrase "the medium is the message" became the source for many programs, discussions, and articles. Television was a 'cool' medium requiring attentive listeners/viewers. He claimed electronic media were supplanting print culture, that the book as a package might become 'obsolete' unless it adapted to the new media. His communication theories often seemed to be at odds with the promotion of library service through books. Many, such as Canada's National Librarian, W.K. Lamb, refused to believe that the book was obsolete. Yet, McLuhan's use of this hot-button word pointed more to an outmoded technology rather than decay and non-usage. Public librarians especially wondered whether the media prophet's proclamation that books were 'hot'—i.e., there was less engagement by the viewer/reader than 'cool' TV—helped promote the community services they were offering. Being regarded as a book provider was not so hot to many librarians who pointed to the importance of other library formats, e.g., films and recordings.

All the same, McLuhan was never a foe of public libraries or print culture. The library was a primary print resource, and librarians were reliable mediators in selecting, organizing, and storing information. In fact, he composed a manuscript with co-author Robert Logan in the late 1970s, which eventually was published in 2016 many years after his untimely death at age 69: Robert K. Logan and

Marshall McLuhan, *The Future of the Library*. Before the virtual or digital library existed, McLuhan hoped libraries would better engage their clientele with new electronic media. His message was hopeful because he believed the book would become an information service rather than a mere package on library shelves. Library resources and the range of services also could change in the same fashion. With the establishment of the 'digital library' by the first decades of the 2000s, McLuhan's optimism about books and libraries expressed many years before beforehand at his two OLA sessions appears well-founded.

Further Reading:

Logan, R., K., McLuhan, M. (2016). *The Future of the Library: From Electric Media to Digital Media*. New York: Peter Lang.

Neill, Samuel D. "Books and Marshall McLuhan." *Library Quarterly; Information, Community, Polity* vol. 41, no. 4 (October 1971): 311–319.

Thursday, December 23, 2021

Two Canadian Films about Bookmobiles: *Roads to Reading* and *Journey from Zero*

Roads to Reading. 16 mm film, colour, sound, 14 minutes, 1958. Produced by the Nova Scotia Film Bureau for the Nova Scotia Provincial Library. Directed by Margaret Perry with Alberta Letts as technical advisor.
Journey from Zero = La Longue Randonnée. 16 mm film, sound, colour, 13 minutes, 1961. National Film Board of Canada, Directed by Roger Blais.

By 1960, regional libraries were fairly well established in Canada. The sight of a bookmobile on Canada's rural roadways was by now means novel anymore. In Nova Scotia, where regional services had begun in earnest in the late 1940s, there were five regional systems: Cape Breton (headquarters in Sydney), Annapolis Valley, Pictou County (headquarters in New Glasgow), Colchester-East Hants (headquarters in Truro), and the Halifax City Regional Library. In 1952, the province adopted a new library act that provided a comprehensive plan for a centralized direction and regional libraries to cover the entire province financed to the amount of more than 50 percent by the provincial treasury. A Provincial Library Service was established to encourage and assist the formation and operation of new regions.

Despite the progress of the 1950s, there were still many areas, e.g., the area surrounding Halifax and Dartmouth, that remained outside regional services. Regions served about half the population of the province through 31 branches, schools, and bookmobiles.

Alberta Letts, the Director of the Provincial Library centred at Halifax, was an energetic leader who was not reluctant to try any measure to promote and form new regions. In concert with the Nova Scotia Film Bureau, a short documentary of how regional services could benefit Nova Scotians was introduced in 1958. It became a beneficial aid at local meetings and indeed gained some prominence across Canada, in part due to the remarkable efforts of two librarians. Alberta Letts was finishing her 1957–58 term as President of the Canadian Library Association, and another regional director at Cape Breton, Ruby Wallace, would assume the presidency of CLA in 1962–63.

Roads to Reading a Film on Public Libraries in Nova Scotia 1958

Roads to Reading was a short feature designed to offer a glimpse of everyday regional library work. At the outset, viewers see an Annapolis Valley bookmobile stop where people exchange books and pick up popular reading. The bookmobile serves fishing villages and farms alike with 1,500 books. Its services radiate out from a central staging point where books are sorted and selected for distribution. The film gives an overview of all the regional operations including branches at Glace Bay, Tatamagouche, and Reserve Mines where the branch memorializes Father Jimmy Tompkins' efforts to introduce library services and promote adult education starting in the 1930s. Smaller places, such as the Air Force Station Greenwood, a post office, and even a bank vault, give a sense of community resourcefulness in supplying reading materials for all ages.

The city of Halifax was an interesting case that served a single municipality through its well-resourced central library. Even the Legislative Library was part of the network of libraries serving Nova Scotians. The film's concluding minutes provide a "how to" synopsis about forming a regional system from local committees, municipalities, and the final authorization by the provincial government. "Reading is always in season," explains the narrator as the bookmobile disappears down a sunny roadway.

Journey from Zero a Film about Bookmobile Service in British Columbia 1961

Journey from Zero is less didactic and its quality ensured by the NFB production standards. In many ways, this film is a travelogue—a visit to Canada's northern areas in British Columbia where books and reading are a welcome commodity to miners, forest workers, aboriginals, military personnel, seasonal tourists, and maintenance workers living along the Alaska Highway. *JFZ's* director, Roger Blais, was an experienced NFB filmmaker who would later become the head of audiovisual production for Expo 67. The film begins at the Dawson Creek library, which is mile zero. Here a small book van is stocked with books for delivery to remote communities. These books are a free service from the British Columbia Library Commission operating from the Peace River Co-operative Library formed in 1952. Over the course of two weeks, the journey will take the van about 900 miles north as far as Whitehorse.

The librarian, Howard Overend, wrote about his experience in his book published in 2001, *The Book Guy: A Librarian in the Peace*: "The acting for *Journey from Zero* was minimal and without speaking parts. There was to be, Roger said, a voice-over in the film so all we had to do was to simulate our usual mobile library work: driving, carrying in the books, meeting the teachers and pupils, showing books to community librarians and so on."

The first stop came at mile 295—a military fire hall station in Muskwa, a now decommissioned armed forces garrison. Then on to Fort Nelson to a library located in a motel office manned by a volunteer. At mile 392, the small van reached Summit Lake, the highest point on the Alaska Highway, where a school housed a small collection of books. At the Liard River, miles 496, the van takes a short side trip for a swim in the hot springs, offering a welcome relief from the tedium of driving and traversing narrow roadways. Then on to Cassiar, a small settlement which is today a ghost town due to closure of an asbestos mine, and finally, Atlin, a small community created during the gold rush era. At this point, the van moves into the Yukon to visit Whitehorse, where a proposed regional library system was in development. The van has travelled about 900 miles and it is time to return home. The film closes with the idea that the world of literature is available to the world of mountains and forests in the farthest reaches of British Columbia, the Peace and Northern Rockies districts.

During the 1960s, these two films publicized the idea of bringing books to people through organized regional services. Alberta Letts went on to form five new regional library systems in Nova Scotia during the 1960s. Unfortunately, she died in a car accident in 1973. Howard Overend continued in the Peace district until the early 1970s until he left to become director of the Fraser Valley Regional Library and for a short time the Territorial Director for Yukon in the early 1980s. He passed away in 2017. Roger Blais was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2000. He died in 2012.

Roads to Reading can be viewed on YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBhmrRFG7CY

Journey from Zero can be viewed at the National Film Board site:
https://www.nfb.ca/film/journey-from-zero/

Howard Overend's personal account is in *The Book Guy* (Victoria, B.C: TouchWood Editions, 2001), pp. 202–207

.

Thursday, December 02, 2021

The American Library Association's Canadian conference in Vancouver, 1949

Canadian library histories often recount six American Library Association's conferences in Canada: Ottawa (1912), Toronto (1927 and 2003), and Montreal (1900, 1934, and 1960). But there is rare mention of another ALA annual meeting held in Vancouver on the University of British Columbia campus from August 22–25 in 1949. It was the only the second ALA meeting on the Pacific west coast following the first in Seattle in 1925. However, this convention was not ALA's usual full-scale conference; instead, it was the first of seven regional ones which the Association experimented with during 1949 to determine their effectiveness. Normally, ALA would register about 3,000 members at its single annual meeting each year. By comparison, there were about 750 in attendance in Vancouver. This number was boosted by the fact that the Pacific Northwest Library Association celebrated its 40th anniversary in Vancouver along with members from western state associations, such as California. A few Canadians, mostly members of the British Columbia Library Association, also were in attendance. By comparison, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) was attracting about 250–500 people to its annual meetings in the late 1940s. The ALA meetings in Toronto in 1927 and Montreal in 1934 had registered almost 2,000 attendees.

The conference featured a number of important ALA official events and speeches. The newly elected officers for ALA in 1949–50 were introduced. The new President was Milton Lord, the director of the Boston Public Library. He would return to Canada to make an address about library community relations in an international setting at the Canadian Library Association's 1950 meeting in Montreal. Clarence R. Graham, librarian of the Louisville Free Public Library became the first Vice-President. In a few years, he would break barriers by making Louisville the first public library in the American southern states to open its main library to Black Americans. A Canadian, Mary E. Silverthorn, from the University of Toronto Library School, was elected to ALA's Council for the term 1949–53.

But the outgoing President, Errett W. McDiarmid, the director of the University of Minnesota library and the university's library instruction programs, made the most news. He had spoken earlier in June at the Canadian Library Association's annual conference (held in Winnipeg) on subjective library standards. One thread of his Vancouver presidential address attempted to counter the growing threat of book censorship in libraries and the suppression of "un-American" ideas and

alleged Communist infiltration. He called on delegates to protect the democratic right to free access information in libraries, to promote free speech, and to support the societal duty of professionals to oppose censorship. The role of librarians and libraries in defending intellectual freedom would increasingly concern ALA members after the strengthened Library Bill of Rights in 1948. In Canada, Vancouver's library director, Edgar Robinson, believed that adults should be able to make their decisions about reading. He did not ban books: he held a few controversial ones on a restricted basis for individuals to request if they chose. Ultimately, Robinson felt book bans were counter-productive. However, it would be many years before the majority of Canadian library associations formally adopted statements of intellectual freedom in the mid-1960s. Even in the United States, the Library of Bill of Rights continued to have many opponents and would be revised on several occasions into the 21st century. More serious was the allegation that a library employee might have communist or socialist leanings—dismissal often followed brief, in-camera reviews such as the contentious John Marshall case at Victoria Public Library in 1954 (almost half a century later the library board would offer Marshall an apology for his mistreatment).

S. S. *Lady Alexandra*—Mystery Cruise Steamer
Far West Regional A.L.A. Conference, Vancouver, B.C.

For the most part, the conference was an amiable, businesslike affair. Delegates discussed part of an important postwar Fourth Activities Committee report that recommended organizational changes in ALA's structure supported by many members. However, California delegates rejected the notion that state

associations should become state chapters of ALA. They preferred the *status quo* of independence and cooperation between states and the ALA. Delegates also had an opportunity to combine business with pleasure. A day was set aside for an enjoyable "mystery cruise" up the scenic British Columbia coastline on the S.S. Lady Alexandra, followed by an evening banquet at the Hotel Vancouver.

Another day was set aside for discussions on the partially completed ALA study headed by Robert D. Leigh, The Public Library Inquiry. The Inquiry would continue until 1952. Bernard Berelson, the author of the 1949 Inquiry volume, *The Library's Public,* said his research confirmed that the library reached only a minority of the population, the better educated. Alice Bryan, who was researching the profiles of public librarians, reported her ongoing research that focused on personality concepts, such as leadership, educational qualifications, and gender issues. Her ground-breaking contribution, *The Public Librarian*, would be published in 1952. Robert Leigh reported on library governance and collections. The findings and recommendations of the Inquiry significantly influenced library planning, namely the encouragement for the concept of larger units of service, the revision of standards, and the eventual achievement of federal aid for public libraries in 1956. The Library Services Act passed by Congress aimed to foster the development of public libraries in rural areas through federal funding. The Inquiry reports emphasized that democracy and enlightened citizenship would continue to be a vital part the public library's mission on a broader societal level.

There were moments when Canadian contributions came to the fore. Edgar Robinson had chaired local arrangements. Anne Smith, the experienced Assistant Librarian at the University of British Columbia, assumed the presidency of the Pacific Northwest Library Association at its annual meeting held on August 25th. Kathleen Jenkins, president of the Canadian Library Association, sent a formal letter of greetings. But the Canadian highlight was Helen Gordon Stewart: she addressed ALA on its closing evening about her experience in the British West Indies. She had been involved from 1941–47 in a Carnegie Corporation funded project, the Regional Library of the Eastern Caribbean, that sought to create a more systematic library service across these islands, especially in Trinidad and Tobago.

The regional conference was one aspect of many efforts to forge closer ties between two nations. ALA's Resolutions Committee closed the conference with a typical expression of appreciation for their Canadian sojourn: "Be it Further Resolved that as we leave sunny British Columbia with regret that our stay has been too short . . . ." In 1952, the Pacific Northwest Library Association revisited British Columbia in Victoria. ALA returned to Canada at a combined ALA-CLA conference in Montreal in 1960 which attracted more than 4,500 participants. The aspect of cross-border ties and cooperative action between ALA (or PNLA) and Canadian associations had strengthened after the Second World War. The

CLA and ALA had formed an ALA-CLA Liaison Committee in 1946 that encouraged joint membership and included both president-elects as alternating chairs each year. The committee was a driving force in arranging the joint ALA-CLA Montreal conference in 1960. The theme of friendship and consensus on library matters would continue to be a unifying force throughout the 1950s and 60s.

Further reading:

The ALA Council meeting proceedings from the 1949 Far West regional conference are available in PDF format courtesy of the ALA's Institutional Repository

Helen Gordon Stewart, "The Regional Library of the Eastern Caribbean," *Pacific Northwest Library Association Quarterly* 14 (October 1949): 27–30.

Thursday, September 30, 2021

Libraries in the Post War Period by Charles Sanderson, 1944

Libraries in the Post War Period, Being the Report of the Chief Librarian to the Toronto Public Library Board, January, 1944 by Charles R. Sanderson. Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1944. 18 p.

Charles Sanderson's ***Libraries in the Post War Period*****,** published in January 1944, naturally focused on Toronto's efforts and touched on the integration of national, provincial, and local matters. Sanderson had been recruited in England by George Locke to come to Toronto to be his assistant, and he succeeded Locke after his death in 1937. The new chief librarian had a first-hand knowledge of British library development and American service ideals that were penetrating Canadian librarianship.

Charles Sanderson's Vision for Canadian Library Development in 1944

Beginning with Toronto, Sanderson developed a theme of library cooperation and formalized networking. In his introductory passages, he promoted five viewpoints:

■ the concept of metropolitan regions with linkages between large urban systems and smaller suburban libraries;
■ regional library systems utilizing bookmobiles;
■ a Dominion Library Commission which, as one part of its mandate, would establish a National Library that could provide an active book lending function;
■ Provincial Library Commissions would establish (or designate) Public Lending Libraries in cities, regional systems, and metropolitan areas. "All in their need would draw upon the Provincial Lending Libraries, which in their turn would draw upon the National Library."
■ a per capita library expenditure of $1.25 would be sufficient on a national basis for such a workable national scheme.

After outlining his views on general library developments, Sanderson turned to the role of individual libraries within this network environment. He noted that libraries, especially in the United States, were undertaking many new ventures. During the war, collections were established in soldier's camps and hospitals. Turning to his own library, Sanderson outlined some of the activities in Beaches, Gerrard, and Riverdale branches. These neighbourhood libraries were exhibiting the artists' work, supporting an active drama league on a makeshift branch stage, hosting lectures, offering discussions and even concerts. Sanderson felt the

community centre idea in the library provided an excellent opportunity to contribute to the development of cultural life. But he believed these activities were ancillary to the library's primary purpose: providing and promoting books was the first requirement.

But the primary purpose of any public library, small or large, might be defined as "getting books read": the creation and expansion of reading habits and the supply of books and collateral material to meet those habits, with the final purpose of making books contribute towards the well-being, material, mental, and cultural, of its community. (p.8)

He provided specific examples of this type of library service.

Citizens' Forums: librarians should aim to make their knowledge useful in the form of suggestions for reading that could make the discussions informative and worthwhile and ensure that reading materials were available.

Lectures: Sanderson thought these much be sequential rather than different from one another. Groups such as the YMCA often provided a program of lectures that focused on a particular aspect that led to self-improvement. Assisting lecture series with requisite books could "build up" to something worthwhile in peoples' lives.

Citizens' Forum at London Public Library, 1945

Book talks: this form of library work was a proven staple in many urban centres. Sanderson could point to the Toronto library's external relationships with various voluntary associations: the Workers' Educational Association, the YWCA, adult and young people's groups in churches, industrial-plant recreation clubs, and Home and School Councils. "Our own 'book-talks' are rather aimed towards

reaching out to groups where reading is not yet a regular habit, that is, towards creating new readers." These talks, library acquisitions, and lending, in general, should be less about recreational and novel reading and more about non-fiction. "Nobody pretends that all non-fiction is superior to all fiction," but in a postwar setting, books helpful to the education and rehabilitation of veterans, focusing on training and skills, was one such subject area that demanded more attention, and consequently, an increased library budget.

In retrospect, Sanderson was comfortable with a metropolitan theme where larger urban libraries and smaller suburban areas could co-exist and enjoy their interdependence and independence. Metropolitan area jurisdictions and regional systems could meet the library needs of many without involving "any change in local autonomy beyond a co-operative agreement for public book provision." (p. 2) From his perspective, the primary function of libraries was "getting books read" and providing the resources for individual adults and children, informal groups, national and local agencies, and different communities of interest to create and expand reading habits. Supplying aids for discussion groups, radio forums, book clubs, lectures, displays, exhibitions, and fairs would further the local library's aim in the field of adult education. Toronto Public Library often created booklists built around the CBC's Citizens' Forums that started in 1943. Sanderson's theme was grounded in local public library service ideas that most Ontario librarians could recognize and appreciate. The idea of civic art centres, community centres, libraries, auditoriums, and swimming pools serving as utilitarian war memorials was a current topic in Canadian newspapers.

However, broad plans for action across the nation required not only local or provincial revenue but also federal grants-in-aid. These grants were not forthcoming because the centres and libraries were considered to be locally administered and outside federal authority. Establishing a national library commission or national library also presented difficulties and delays. The metropolitan scheme advocated by Sanderson did not come into being in the Toronto area until 1953 and libraries were originally excluded from "metro" government arrangements. A coordinating metro library agency was not established in Toronto until 1958, two years after Charles Sanderson passed away.

My biography for Charles Sanderson is at this link.

Monday, September 27, 2021

The National Library of Canada, Its Eventual Character and Scope by the Canadian Library Association, August 1949

The National Library of Canada, Its Eventual Character and Scope; A Brief Submitted to the Chairman and Members of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences *by the Canadian Library Association/Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques, 1949 [For release on 18 August 1949]*. [Ottawa]: the Association, 1949. 5 p. with exhibits.

On 8 April 1949, Prime Minister Louis St-Lauren asked the Governor General of Canada to approve an Order-in-Council, appointing a Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences under the chairmanship of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey. For two years, the Commissioners held public hearings across the country, received briefs, and called many witnesses to investigate the state of Canada's arts and culture. A final report appeared in June 1951.

Canadian Library Association Statement to the Massey Commission 1949

Naturally, the Canadian Library Association/Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques (CLA-ACB) committee on a national library, headed by Freda Waldon, prepared a brief for the Commission in summer 1949. After the previous brief in 1946, ***A National Library for Canada; A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada***, the Association did not need to consider proposals about progress towards forming the Bibliographical Centre, which had already been approved by legislators. Now was the opportunity to take a longer-range view; consequently, CLA-ACB concentrated on the acquisition of collections and a suitable building to house holdings. The new Brief was short and to the point. First, it outlined the need to build a retrospective and current collection: "The distinguishing characteristic of a Canadian National Library will be its extensive collection of Canadian material. The aim, in the opinion of the Association, should be completeness." Then, it advocated for the planning and construction of a suitable building.

For collections, the Brief stated the need to amend the Copyright Act so that the National Library would be the legal depository of all material copyrighted, with a legal clause enforcing deposit to ensure comprehensiveness. As a result, copies of all Canadian government documents and other publishers would be in one central collection. "This would lessen the work of the government departments

concerned, simplify order procedure for libraries, and ensure a constant and complete supply of documents from one distributing centre." Further,

Whereas the National Library will give direct service to the Government of Canada, and research workers in Ottawa, it will also serve as the prime library of the nation, and will, to the best of its ability, meet the needs of any person in Canada, wherever he is situated, either by furnishing the actual material required by means of an inter-library loan, or, in the case of rare holdings, by lending, or supplying at cost, photographic reproductions or microfilm. Thus its services will extend into fields far beyond the reach of local libraries. (p. 3)

The Brief's second line of reasoning requested that the earliest consideration be given to a site for the National Library building. It called for functional architectural features and sufficient space for future expansion. CLA-ACB's previous brief submitted in December 1946 was appended to clarify the service roles for the new institution.

In conclusion, CLA-ACB underscored collaboration: "Operating to a large extent in cooperation with provincial and local libraries, the National Library should make its resources available to all government services, business men, workers, teachers, scholars; in short, to all the people of Canada."

The Massey commissioners took note of the thrust of CLA-ACB's brief and supported its ideas when it issued a final report. In a section on federal libraries, the Report stated "That a National Library be established without delay; that a librarian be appointed as soon as may be expedient." The government received the library recommendations and pressed ahead. On Tuesday, 20 May 1952, Prime Minister St. Laurent moved that the House of Commons consider the resolution to introduce legislation to establish a national library and to appoint a national librarian. The House debated and passed Bill 245 for the establishment of a National Library on 27 May 1952. The bill received royal assent in June. CLA-ACB's long campaign to create a National Library had concluded successfully after three major briefs to the government and intensive lobbying efforts of cabinet ministers, members of parliament, and influential officials. The *National Library Act* came into force on 1 January 1953 with Dr. W. Kaye Lamb as National Librarian.

W. Kaye Lamb, c.1948

Further Reading:

The 1949 CLA-ACB presentation, *The National Library of Canada*, is available online.

My earlier blog post discussed the National Library Act and subsequent activity to erect a building.

Saturday, September 25, 2021

A National Library for Canada; A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada, December 1946

A National Library for Canada; A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada submitted by the Canadian Library Association/Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques, Royal Society of Canada, Canadian Historical Association, Canadian Political Science Association, Social Science Research Council of Canada. [Ottawa: s.n.], December 1946. 16 p. with appendices.

Canadian Library Association Statement on a National Library, 1946

"A National Library is, first of all, the most comprehensive Library in the world in its own country. A National Library is also a centre for services to other libraries, research workers and individuals . . . an agency responsible for the national bibliography . . . in short, the nerve centre of the whole network of libraries in the country." This introduction to the need for a National Library, which was presented to the federal government on 27 January 1947, signalled a new approach to establishing a national library. Previous efforts had emphasized the construction of a new facility, the collection of books, and the growth of national libraries of other countries. The 1946 Joint Brief recommended a different course of action:

The main argument of this Brief is that, while a great building is probably not possible at this stage, it is not necessary to wait for a building to establish the National Library for Canada and that, in fact, the ultimate building will be more satisfactorily planned if the National Library is brought into being first.
The Brief therefore asks that a committee or board be set up now to investigate the practical possibilities of starting such services as the Brief suggests . . . . (p. 3)

The emphasis on a service role was a pragmatic decision based on a recognition that the Dominion government under Mackenzie King was not likely to fund an expensive building and pay for its upkeep and expansion in a postwar setting that prioritized jobs and a transition to a peacetime economy. Instead, temporary quarters could be utilized until conditions were more favourable. Accordingly, the Brief requested that a committee or group responsible to a cabinet minister (or a committee of ministers) study the matter and report back with recommendations for action. By this time, the Canadian Library Association had been formed in 1946, headed by its first President, Freda Waldon, the chief librarian of the Hamilton Public Library (pictured below). She was concerned

with prioritizing CLA's efforts and had decided to focus on the service components of a National Library, especially its bibliographical potential.

The other learned societies also agreed to this direction. *A National Library for Canada* set forth the various functions of such a library, its national benefits, and future proposals for implementation and investigation. Several documents and supporting resolutions were appended to the Joint Brief to expand various points of interest. A few essential functions were presented under three succinct heading: (1) a centre of research; (2) national services; and (3) international obligations.

As a research centre, the Library would cooperate with the Public Archives, National Art Gallery, National Museum, National Research Council and other institutions to preserve and organize the use of all records of the country. A comprehensive collection would involve deposit legislation and copyright amendments.

As a national service, the Library would perform four essential functions. To coordinate existing library resources, creating a bibliographical centre based on a union catalogue was the first step. In this way, books could be made available through lending or copying. A national bibliography could compile lists of government documents and issue a catalogue of all books published in Canada and about the country, and books authored by Canadians. Thirdly, the Library could prepare and circulate exhibitions showing the achievements of Canadians. Finally, the Library could provide technical services to libraries "in the fields of cataloguing and classification [that] would not only save time in every library in Canada but raise standards, increase efficiency and help to ensure uniformity of practice."

As a national government agency dealing with international issues, the Library would keep abreast of international bibliography, facilitate international loans, and communicate with other national libraries.

The fundamental benefits of a National Library were presented in more succinct detail. The Library would be a centre of intellectual life in Canada: it would guarantee that the country's history would be preserved, and signify the importance of literary endeavors and contributions by publishers to Canadian life. Its activities would energize library work across the nation. In recommending the formation of a committee to study these issues, the Joint Brief proposed that the study committee should consider the following points (p. 14):
1. The general organization and function of the National Library;

2. The most desirable form for a permanent advisory body;
3. Necessary legislation, including amendments to the Copyright Act; and
4. The immediate services to be instituted, with estimates of costs.

The idea that a National Library could begin as an information bureau and bibliographical centre was a practical proposal that made implementation easier and less financially stressful for the federal government. Services could be introduced, "Then, step by step, as one service after another is instituted, the National Library will grow and develop and when the time comes to erect a great building the living organization will be there, ready to occupy it."

Federal Government Action to Establish a National Library

The government's initial response to the Joint Brief took some time, but after more than a year, in May 1948, the House of Commons referred the National Library proposal to the Joint Committee of the Library of Parliament. This Committee reported in short order, in June, that as a first step toward the creation of a National Library the planning of a Bibliographical Centre should proceed. In September 1948, Dr. W. Kaye Lamb was appointed Dominion Archivist with authority to prepare the way for the Library.

In November, the government made appointments to a National Library Advisory Committee to assist Dr. Lamb. A year-and-a-half later, on 1 May 1950, the Canadian Bibliographic Centre came into existence on the first floor of the Public Archives building. By 1951, the Centre was publishing a bilingual national bibliography entitled *Canadiana* and establishing a union catalogue by photographing thousands of catalogue cards. After almost a half century of debate, incrementalism had triumphed as the key to forming a Canadian national library. When the Massey Commission studied the issue of a national library and issued its report in 1951, a number of meaningful ideas advanced in the Joint Brief were already underway.

Further Reading:

A National Library for Canada; A Brief Presented to the Government of Canada … December 1946, is available online at Library and Archives Canada as a submission to the Massey Commission.

My blog on a subsequent brief by CLA to the federal government in 1949 concerning the national library is at this link.

Thursday, September 23, 2021

A National Library by Elizabeth Dafoe (1944)

A National Library by Elizabeth Dafoe. [Toronto:] Canadian Adult Education Association, 1944. 5 p. [offprint from *Food for Thought*, v.4, no. 8, May, 1944]

After introducing her topic with a summary of major publications and earlier efforts to advocate for the establishment of a national library in Ottawa—all of which had come to nought—Elizabeth Dafoe, chief librarian at the University of Manitoba, posed the question:

Is the apathy of the public in this regard due to ignorance of the real nature of a national library, the confusion of its functions with those of a parliamentary library, lack of pride in Canada's history and cultural growth, or a general indifference to libraries and library service?

Then, she proceeded to develop a cogent statement in a strong and well-argued manner on the need and functions of a national library that would constitute an important part of a postwar plan for library development in Canada. Her report would form part of a later brief to Ottawa by the Canadian Library Association and other national organizations. At the federal level, there was support for a National Library by politicians such as Paul Martin, Sr., a prominent progressive Liberal MP from the Windsor area, and a few other Members.

Elizabeth Dafoe and the Need for a National Library 1944

Dafoe's appeal for a national library expressed her concern that libraries should be an integral part of the country's postwar fabric. They were institutions that could preserve and make available the historical record of many ideas, events, and personages giving Canadians a national identity. Indifference, apathy, or ignorance of Canada's past or its potential future were failings that could be surmounted if library advocates developed a concerted campaign. Dafoe admitted that library service in Canada was "disjointed and unorganized compared to such service in Great Britain." In particular, there was no single agency responsible for preserving printed records of the country as a whole or coordinating an effort to assemble these records. But there were solutions at hand. One crucial element in a Dominion-wide plan was the establishment of a national library.

Dafoe outlined some essential features such as service that would reappear in the years ahead. These ideas were not original, yet her timing when governments were assuming a greater role in society was favourable. Her primary aims for a national library were as follows:

• the primary goal is the collection of all books and pamphlets published in the country or relating to it. This activity would involve the legal deposit right to receive free copies of each book printed or copyrighted in Canada. As well, the acquisition of older or rare books and other publications relating to Canada which were published beyond its borders was an important consideration.

• the national library would be responsible for making its collection available to scholars and students of the country. This would not involve lending the latest works of fiction, but rather important works for serious study and investigation. To achieve this goal, the library would require "proper housing of the collection, adequate recording and administration of it, sufficient space for readers, and a safe and efficient system of delivery to students who are unable to visit the library in person and who cannot obtain the required publications from a library in their vicinity."

• the creation and maintenance of a national union catalogue of holdings by major libraries. Catalogue listings/locations would be the key to sharing books in the various Ottawa governmental libraries and identifying rare, valuable books across the country. The catalogue would form a reliable system of inter-library loans and greatly assist research.

• the establishment of a photo-duplication section where "photostatic, enlarged photo-print, or microfilm copies of books or articles could be made on request and issued at cost." As well, assistance in selecting, purchasing, and allocating materials would eliminate duplication in collection building.

In looking at the actual mechanics of building a national collection, Dafoe turned to the Parliamentary Library, which served Canada's members of Parliament as a legislative reference library. Its chief, Félix Desrochers, had estimated that about 350,000 books could be moved to form the nucleus of a genuine national library. Cooperation with the Public Archives was also essential. She foresaw the future in a cooperative, networking environment with Ottawa's national institutions providing leadership for the provinces and major libraries across the country. Dafoe's plea was not a new vision but one that was argued in a compelling way at a crucial time. Her ideas would reappear in a few years when the Canadian Library Association and four learned societies presented the federal government with a brief, *A National Library for Canada*, in December 1946.

In her concluding remarks, Dafoe posted another question: "Is it too much to hope that in time we shall see in Canada a chain of libraries: provincial, regional, and municipal; public, business, university and college; and at the centre, practically and spiritually if not geographically, a great National Library?" The next quarter-century would see positive steps in Canadian library development;

but Elizabeth Dafoe died in 1960 before a building housing the national archives and library opened its doors on Wellington Street, a few blocks from Parliament Hill.

Read my biography about Elizabeth Dafoe at this blog site.

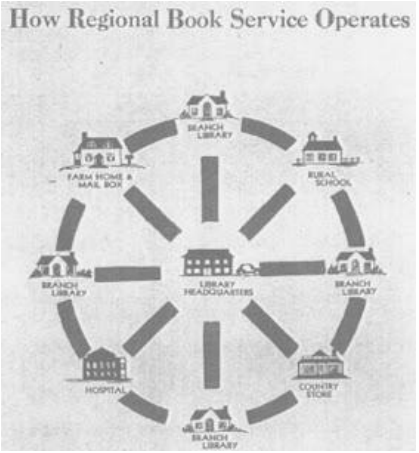
Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Rural Canada Needs Libraries by Nora Bateson (1944)

Rural Canada Needs Libraries/Livres pour Aujourd'hui et Demain by Nora Bateson. Ottawa: Canadian Library Council, Inc., 1944. 8 pages with diagrams.

The genesis of Nora Bateson's pamphlet on the scarcity of libraries in rural Canada was her February 1943 article "Libraries Today and Tomorrow" in the journal *Food for Thought* published by the Canadian Association for Adult Education. At this time, Bateson was still Director of Libraries, Regional Library Commission, Nova Scotia, and worked to assist the Canadian Legion Education Services in organizing libraries for armed forces personnel serving in the Atlantic region. Her knowledge of rural Canadian conditions stemmed from her previous library positions. She had first worked in the Carnegie financed Fraser Valley regional demonstration in British Columbia in the early 1930s. Afterwards, she established a regional library system in Prince Edward Island from 1933–36 and then prepared the way for the development of regional libraries in Nova Scotia with a series of publications and speaking engagements across the province. As a result of her considerable administrative background in library extension work, she was well-versed in delivering service in rural communities and remote settlements.

Food for Thought was an important Canadian publication which often highlighted library efforts to assist adult educationists. The solution Nora Bateson relied upon was the formation of regional library systems. This type of public library was not new by any means, but the Canadian experience had diverged from British and American versions. Typically, at the outset of the Second World War a regional library in British Columbia and Ontario was an agency serving a group of communities (called a union library in BC), a single county (called a county association library in Ontario), or, in Prince Edward Island, an entire province. These bodies were supported in whole or in part by public taxes from a variety of local government expenditures and were governed by provincial statues.



Rural Canada Needs Library graphic

Whether men or women were fighting on the battlefield or working on the home front to support democracy, Bateson emphasized the beneficial, even essential, role of reading, books, and public libraries:

Books are indeed important weapons in the double-fronted fight for freedom. But in them is to be found, too, refreshment and recreation for the mind and spirit at all times. Biographies, histories, novels, poems, plays, books of philosophy, books on art and music: such books literally open up new worlds and new channels of interest and speculation. They give also perspective and balance to the immediate urgent problems of the day.

Of course, in many urban municipalities, the library was a vital part of the distribution chain of books but not in rural Canada. Citing 1938 statistics gathered by the Canadian government, Bateson noted the striking disparities in service: 92% of city dwellers had library service, 42% in towns and villages, and only 5% in rural districts, which represented nearly half of Canada's population. The remedy: "Small communities cannot afford such a service but several communities pooling their funds can. Today the general opinion of experts is that a minimum of 40,000 people is desirable with a minimum budget of $25,000." She estimated 50 cents per capita would provide a basis for adequate service.

To support the regional concept, Bateson briefly reviewed the development of county systems in the United Kingdom and the United States. She then turned to Canada, noting the formation of diverse examples of regional service across the Dominion:
Fraser Valley Union Library, BC
Okanagan Valley Union Library, BC
Vancouver Island Union Library, BC

Prince Edward Island Library
Eight county library associations in Southern Ontario
Eastern Township Library Association, headquarters in Sherbrooke, QC
Legislation in Nova Scotia to support the formation of regions through an appointed library commission.

For other types of rural service, she opined that "Travelling libraries and open shelf systems are generally a stop-gap and no substitute for full library service." Small boxes of books sent out to small communities or the loan of a requested book(s) by mail to individual borrowers were merely supplements to a "real service." Indeed, by the 1960s, travelling libraries and open shelves were being phased out across the country.

In her concluding remarks, Bateson addressed the issue of establishing and directing regions in the nine provinces.

What is needed in every province is a library commission keenly aware of the need for universal library service which will formulate a provincial plan and work towards its establishment. Such a commission usually consists of five (sometimes seven) members, serving say five years, one member retiring each year.

To finance libraries, Bateson recommended substantial support from provincial coffers because many municipalities could not increase expenditures due to education, infrastructure, or social welfare costs. Because there were many disparities between the economies of the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, and British Columbia, Bateson considered federal equalization grants for libraries a possible solution. Ever the optimist, she finished by saying, "When we win this war it is the common man in Canada as in all the United Nations who will be the victor and who will largely decide on the kind of peace and the sort of world which is to follow. Information and knowledge about the issues at stake need wide circulation such as can only be effectively accomplished by books." The author's original article was well-received; accordingly, the Canadian Library Council published it as separate pamphlet along with a French version a year later in 1944.

Over the next decade, just more than a half dozen newly formed regional systems would appear in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. Improved legislation in Ontario reformed and strengthened the county library cooperatives. These systems served about 1,500,000 people, mostly in rural districts surrounding smaller towns, and they were circulating almost 5,000,000 volumes. This was a dramatic change from the situation described by Bateson, who lived to see these improvements before she died in 1956.

Further reading:

Sue Adams, "Our Activist Past: Nora Bateson, Champion of Regional Libraries," *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 4, no. 1 (2009): 1–12.

Nora Bateson, *Rural Canada Needs Libraries*. Ottawa: Canadian Library Council, Inc., 1944. [requires Adobe PDF viewer]

For Bateson's other contributions in P.E.I. and Nova Scotia see my earlier blog.

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Library Service for Canada Brief by the Canadian Library Council, 1944

Library Service for Canada: A Brief Prepared by the Canadian Library Council, as Forwarded August 2, 1944, to the House of Commons Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-Establishment. 10 leaves, 2 appendices [Ottawa?]: Canadian Library Council, July 1944.

In 1942, the Canadian House of Commons appointed a Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment. James Gray Turgeon, a Liberal politician from British Columbia, served as chair. The committee's purpose was to study and report the potential problems and ensuing responses that might arise from a postwar period of reconstruction and re-establishment following the Second World War. The committee submitted a report of its activities and associated briefs in 1944 and completed its work in 1945. A major aspect of the committee's activities concerned the state of culture across the Dominion. A variety of arts and cultural groups made submissions which helped create a better awareness of cultural issues. These early efforts provided a basis for which later developments could occur, which saw the federal government support Canadian artists and develop national institutions in the 1950s. In terms of library service, the Canadian Library Council (CLC) assumed the responsibility for drafting a brief earlier in the summer of 1944, but final approval was delayed until July. The CLC then forwarded its report to the committee for its 2 August 1944 meeting; however, the Council did not make an oral submission and receive questions, although references to the CLC's proposal appear in the committee's minutes for this date.

It was well known from many reports in the 1930s that library services in schools, colleges, and municipal institutions were deficient. A 1943 survey by the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association especially lamented the poor state of school and public libraries. One of its reported recommendations concluded: "That library service be extended over the whole Dominion. Not less than $1,000,000 per annum is required for this purpose." The CLC, formed in 1941 and incorporated in late 1943, existed to promote library service and librarianship in Canada. It included representatives from library associations in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, the Maritimes, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. By 1944, its membership was busy publishing information to raise awareness about the need for rural service, regional libraries, a national library, and improved library education. The Turgeon Committee afforded an excellent opportunity to give prominence to library matters at the federal government level.

Library Service for Canada Statement 1944

Agency Co-operation—Hamilton Public library operates a branch in the East Hamilton wartime house used as a Community Centre.

There are a few references to the CLC's work on 21 June 1944, when a delegation representing 16 national arts groups presented the Reconstruction Committee a brief concerning the cultural aspects of Canadian postwar reconstruction. This "Artists Brief" (as it came to be known) set forth a comprehensive national program to encourage the fine and applied arts and general culture in the interest of an enriched society. It called for establishing a national "governmental body" to administer the arts and for the founding of hundreds of community art and civic centres across the country in municipalities and rural communities, such as the one in Hamilton featured in this accompanying illustration. One component of these centres would be a municipal library in larger cities and regional or county libraries in smaller communities and rural districts. At this time there were only a few libraries operating in community centres. The Dominion government would fund these centres by setting aside $10,000,000.The brief also proposed the coordination of cultural activities by the National Film Board, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation with the building of community centres. Other proposals for government attention concerned many issues such as copyright law, creating a national library, expanding the national archives, and improved programs for federal publications and government information. In the case of library service, establishing a national library in Ottawa would provide for the "circulation of books in Canada and for the sending of the best Canadian books to public libraries in other countries to create a better understanding of Canadian life." The Arts and Letters Club in Toronto reiterated these ideas and called for "a tremendous extension of library services in Canada." The playwright, Herman Voaden, one of the artists delegation, said, "When you build

a library you make provision for a small stage at one end and for clearing the hall for plays and concerts. You have art exhibitions on the walls."

At the same June session, the Canadian Authors Association also weighed in on the development of libraries with two specific points:

That travelling libraries be organized and circulated in rural districts throughout Canada, including books written by Canadian authors, and dealing with Canada—these to be drawn from a central library or depot of Canadian books at Ottawa, which shall be adequately financed and staffed for that purpose—the staff to be drawn by preference from discharged Service men or women but strictly limited to competent persons. This library service would fit into the Community Centres Plan accompanying this brief, which we support. That collections of the best Canadian books available be sent to public libraries in other countries of the United Nations, to create a better understanding of Canadian Culture.

Together with other short references, library services caught the attention of Members of Parliament at the June session. In the context of all the cultural briefs, discussions at the Reconstruction Committee hearings, and general postwar planning, CLC forwarded its brief to the Reconstruction Committee in August. The CLC emphasized three critical points at the outset: (p. 5)

The Canadian Library Council believes that an effective, Dominion-wide, library service can make a valuable contribution toward the settlement of post-war problems of rehabilitation by providing books and audio-visual aids in training or re-training demobilized service and civilian personnel for new and old skills; by dispensing current information regarding new developments in the fields of agriculture, industry, business, and the professions; by supplying cultural, recreational, and citizenship reading.

London Public Library art display, March 1945

The Council brief also noted the potential for library development in a national community centres program: “This would be a natural association of services. The Library is open every day to a varied group of readers and its workers are trained in community guidance. The cultural art centre with the library as nucleus (featured in this illustration on the left) has been demonstrated successfully in London, Ontario, where book, art, music, and film services are provided under one administration.” However, the Council advocated a centralized plan of development beginning with a federally appointed and financed national Library Resources Board “to guide, co-ordinate, and encourage provincial, local and special efforts.” The initial focus for the Board would be a survey of existing library resources and book collections used by the armed forces at stations that would be discontinued and any suitable buildings at present used by wartime activities. With this information and collection of provincial data, the Board, using federal funds under its control, could provide incentive grants for regional libraries and devise a system of co-operative use of library resources at provincial and local levels. A regional library would typically be “40,000 people with a budget of $25,000 a year [which is] is the minimum unit recommended in order to supply the readers with the three essentials of library service (apart from buildings accommodation), [that is] a wide range of reading on all subjects, a constant supply of new books, and trained librarians to select the books, advise readers, and manage library affairs.” (p. 8)

The National Library Service would include a variety of institutions and ambitious programs:
1) a National Library in a building perhaps dedicated as a war memorial;
2) compilation of a storehouse of national literature and history;
3) development of reference collections on all subjects;
4) formation of a lending collection which other libraries might borrow from when their resources failed;
5) shared microfilm, photostat, and other copying services;
6) a union catalogue to make existing books in libraries available through an inter-library loan on a Dominion-wide basis;
7) the coordination of book information with audio-visual aids, working in close co-operation with the National Film Board, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and other national organizations;
8) administration of collections of books about Canada for exhibition abroad;
9) publication of bibliographical works about Canada.

The Library Resources Board would also encourage adequate standards for personnel, training, salaries, etc. Finally, the Board would provide library consultation services (e.g., legislation, book tariffs, postal rates, the National

Selective Service, and functional architectural plans). The proposed national library board to direct and coordinate library work was a bold idea, but it was in keeping with the sweeping powers the federal government had assumed during wartime as well as the central idea proposed in the Artists Brief. Much of the work of the national advisory Library Resources Board could be furthered by assistance from provincial library associations and groups working in adult education or teaching. By providing leadership through the creation of library standards and advisory services, the Library Resources Board could spur library expansion. In this scheme of thinking, a National Library was necessary to implement and support many activities. The CLC's plan did not avoid the thorny issue of financing by the federal government (p. 10).

Dominion encouragement of library service will need large initial grants. The suggestion has been made that funds could be raised to initiate such projects as library undertakings, community centres, etc., by a special Victory Loan to supply the Tools of Peace. Another suggestion is for an annual per capita tax to provide funds to maintain the above enterprises.

In conjunction with other provincial briefs submitted by library associations and groups, the CLC's postwar rebuilding vision could advance the nation's "intelligence, character, economic advancement, and cultural life." (p. 4) Library reconstruction plans at all government levels would confer benefits for Canada's citizens and lead to a better, more informed society. Some of the main ideas in the brief— a national commission, a national library, and regionalization—had appeared earlier in January 1944 in Charles Sanderson's *Libraries in the Post War Period*. Sanderson had accentuated the potential programs and roles that libraries might assume in their communities and noted the importance of provincial organization. To bolster its case, the CLC appended two more specific documents: Nora Bateson's *Rural Canada Needs Libraries* and Elizabeth Dafoe's *A National Library*. Both publications had appeared earlier and already received distribution and promotion across Canada. [These will be the subject of future blog posts.]

Like the contemporary Artists Brief, *Library Service for Canada* achieved little in terms of prompting federal action or securing funding. In the immediate aftermath of WWII, the federal government's priorities were decidedly not cultural and political support for libraries at local levels sporadic. The arts and library services were provincial and municipal responsibilities. The postwar Liberal governments under Mackenzie King and Louis St. Laurent prioritized economic recovery, jobs and housing for veterans, national defence, and immigration. And there were additional obstacles. Although both the arts and library plans proposed centralized direction and coordination, the building of multi-functional community centres depended on local initiatives and preferences in hundreds of government settings. When Leaside, an independent suburban community in Toronto, decided to build a community centre shortly after the

war, the need for sporting facilities, not a library, moved to the fore. As a result, a separate $100,000 library building opened on 8 March 1950 in Millwood Park (now Trace Manes Park), two years before the community centre, which required extensive fundraising beyond original expectations, began operation. The trend to form regional libraries developed slowly. By the early 1950s, there were only two dozen regional or county systems serving about 1,500,000 people in seven provinces, mostly in Ontario. In the realm of education, new schools required increased capital and operating tax levies that made library requests challenging to fulfill. At the national level, federal government enthusiasm for the building of a National Library was episodic. Library advocates began to focus on incremental program activities, not an expensive construction project.

Nevertheless, *Library Service for Canada* heightened awareness of the need for libraries, especially regional library development and national-provincial planning in a country that had scarcely equated libraries with this type of development before WWII. It presented a progressive vision, parts of which would persist and eventually change Canada's library landscape for the better.

The ten members representing various Canadian jurisdictions who endorsed the CLC brief were:
Nora Bateson, Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission
Alexander Calhoun, Calgary Public Library
Elizabeth Dafoe, University of Manitoba Library
Léo-Paul Desrosiers, Montréal Public Library
Hélène Grenier, Bibliothèque des Instituteurs de la Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal
Gerhard R. Lomer, McGill University Library
John M. Lothian, University of Saskatchewan Library
Edgar S. Robinson, Vancouver Public Library
Charles R. Sanderson, Toronto Public Library
Margaret S. Gill, Chairman, National Research Council Library, Ottawa

Further reading

Canadian and Newfoundland Education Association. *Report of the Survey Committee Appointed to Ascertain the Chief Educational Needs in the Dominion of Canada* (Ottawa: the Association, March 30th, 1943).

Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment. *Minutes and Proceedings of Evidence,* vol. 1. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1944.

Nora Bateson. *Rural Canada Needs Libraries*. Ottawa: Canadian Library Council, 1944. [Previously, a shorter version had appeared as an article:

“Libraries for Today and Tomorrow,” *Food for Thought* 3, no. 5 (February 1943): 12–19.]

Elizabeth Dafoe. “A National Library,” *Food for Thought* 4, no. 8 (May 1944): 4–8.

Library Service for Canada was republished along with accompanying provincial briefs in 1945. This book, *Canada Needs Libraries*, was reviewed previously in my blog in 2017.

Thursday, August 19, 2021

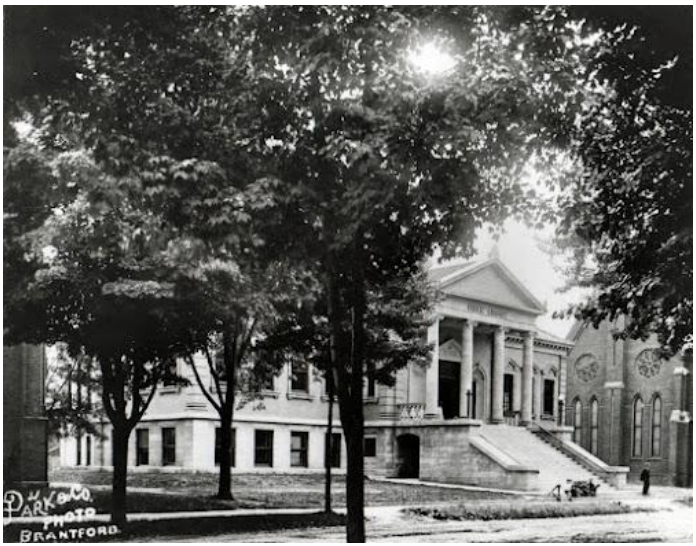
Brantford 1904 Carnegie library

Brantford's classic red brick Beaux-Arts Carnegie Library, constructed between 1902 and 1904, was located at 73 George Street across from Victoria Park in the city's main square. The building was designed by the firm of William and Walter Stewart with Lewis Taylor and manifested a sense of grand monumentalism with its central dome and a 20-step main entrance as shown in a 1917 First World War picture taken more than a dozen years after it opened on July 4, 1904.

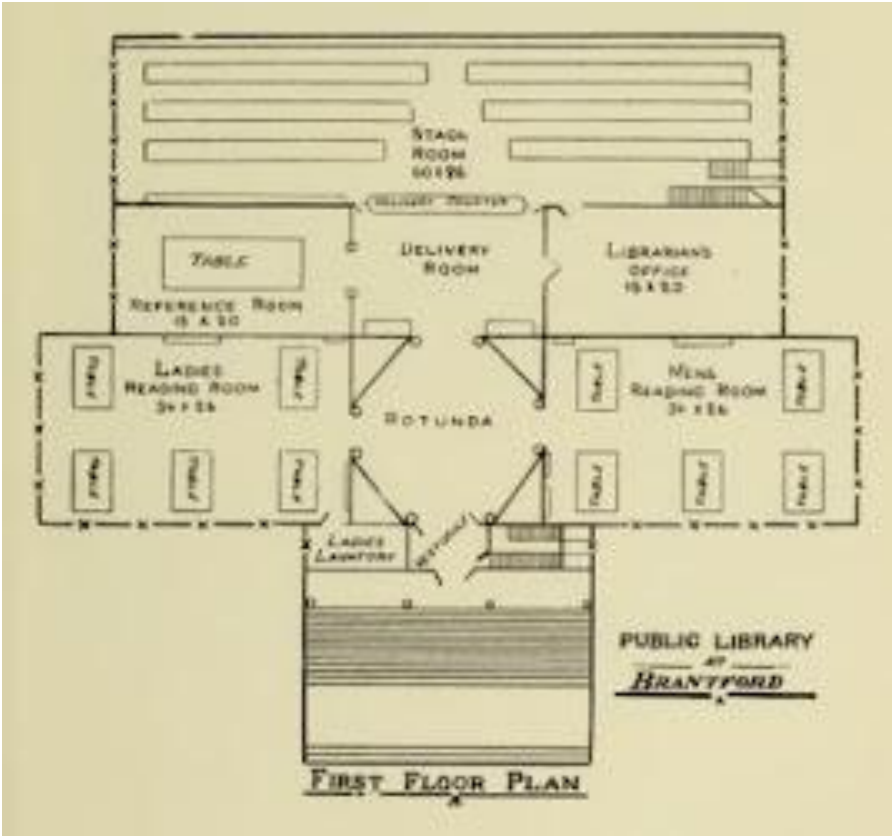
Andrew Carnegie promised Brantford $30,000 after receiving a 1902 request from a prominent local judge, Alexander David Hardy, who was deeply interested in books, libraries, history, and cultural life in the city. Judge Hardy became an active local library trustee who later served as President of the Ontario Library Association in 1909—10. Brantford was one of Ontario's leading cities at the time, with a population (1901 census) of just over 16,000. In a contemporary 1902 report by Lawrence Burpee, "Modern Public Libraries and their Methods," Brantford reported holdings of almost 17,000 volumes and circulation just short of 67,000 items per year. The library staff numbered four, and a printed catalogue recorded holdings. About eighty percent of the collection was classed as fiction. This figure may reflect that the library used an antiquated classification system initially designed for mechanics' institutes in Ontario thirty years earlier. More proficient methods were about to be employed under a new librarian, Edwin D. Henwood, including the Dewey Decimal system. Henwood became one of the many Ontario voices for improved library service in the course of his twenty-two years as chief librarian. He died suddenly in 1924 leaving a bequest of $1,000 for the children's section that he had introduced.

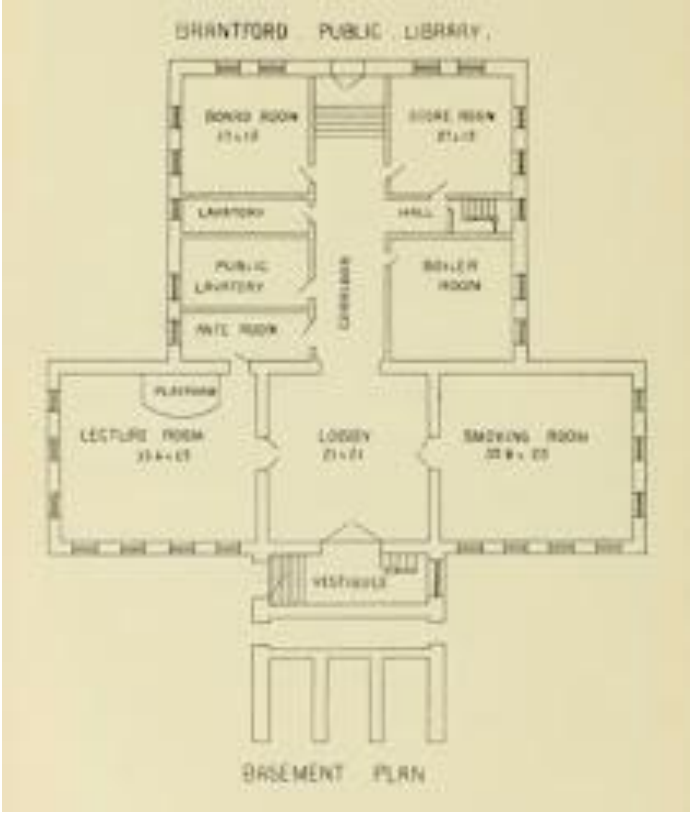
After the city council agreed to comply with Carnegie's terms to support its new free library, during the construction phase, costs escalated well beyond original 1902 estimates. Again, Hardy wrote to the Scottish-American philanthropist, who responded with an additional $5,000 in 1904 to complete the city's building on the main square. As years passed, Hardy remained fully engaged with the library's development, and in 1913, when the need for an enlarged stack room and basement became evident, he again asked for increased funding. Fortunately, the Carnegie Foundation (est. 1905) granted $13,000 of the $15,000 required to make the new renovation possible. The three grants totalling $48,000 became one of the most significant for Carnegie library buildings in Canada.

Many different exterior architectural elements exhibited the Beaux-Arts symmetry and style of the library. These features are evident in a serious of pictures taken by the award winning Park Co. [Edward P. Park] that are preserved at the Archives of Ontario. The Beaux-Arts style was popular in Europe and North American and suited more refined cultural tastes and respect for literature and reading. The classical form included a large portico supported by four Ionic columns surmounted by a triangular pediment. The dome above the portico offered an impressive visual presence which was complemented by a hipped roof. "Public Library" was inscribed across the nomenclature beneath the pediment, and just below above the main entrance, a Latin verse from the *Odes* of Horace proclaimed, "I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze." To some people, the library exuded a sense of permanence--it was a lasting storehouse of knowledge. The exterior classical form of the building also included smaller formal decorations. Three small palmettes (*arcoteria*) adorned the two sides and peak of the central pediment. The names of famous Anglo-American writers such as Shakespeare, Tennyson, Emerson, Dickens, Burns, and Thackeray were engraved on the smaller pedimented main-storey front windows.



Inside the library, the primary visual feature at the entrance was, of course, the rotunda under the dome. Several stained-glass skylights at the top gave an air of elegance and permitted more highlighting of the recessed displays, marble walls, mosaic tiled floor, and adjoining rooms. The two separate reading rooms (each 884 sq. ft.) flanking the rotunda were designed separately for ladies and gentlemen. The stack room (1,560 sq ft.) was located at the back and fronted by a charging station with two smaller rooms to each side (each 300 sq. ft), one for reference another for the librarian. There was no direct public access to the bookshelves, and the library enforced an age limit of fourteen which barred children. Stairs to the lower level led to a men's smoking and conversation room (35 ft x 25 ft), a lecture room (35 ft x 25 ft), and a board room for meetings.




BRANTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY.
BOARD ROOM
LAVATORY
PUBLIC LAVATORY
JANITOR'S ROOM
CORRIDOR
HALL
BOILER ROOM
LECTURE ROOM
LOBBY
SMOKING ROOM
VESTIBULE
BASEMENT PLAN

PIERCE CO
PHOTO

The principal defect in the library plan for adults seemed to be the separation of the two reading rooms from the books. Book retrievals by staff from the delivery counter were required, and users then had to retire to the rooms beside a noisy entrance area to browse or read items. The reference area was small and accommodated only one table for multiple users. As well, the front entrance steps for infirm or aged residents were a barrier indeed. The absence of a separate children's area or room was soon recognized. An enlarged area for book stacks was built in 1913. Despite these physical drawbacks and necessary changes to the original plan, the Brantford library was known to be a progressive and service oriented. For several years after 1906, short regional library "institutes" for library staff and trustees were held at which new ideas were exchanged and hands-on training conducted.

Two decades after the library opened, residents were borrowing more than 140,000 volumes each year, just less than five volumes per capita. A children's department had been developed in the basement in 1910 after the elimination of the onerous age limit. Sunday afternoon openings in the reading and reference rooms came into effect in 1911. Judge Hardy continued to play an important role in the development of the library due to his interest in historical works and progressive civic ideas. Speaking in 1910 at the Ontario Library Association meeting in Toronto, he looked forward to library progress:

One feature of this modern age which we must all recognize is that a knowledge of the fact whatever that fact may be about is the lord and master of the situation; and the modern library tends, by its reference department and by its methods for investigating, and its educative processes, to give citizens generally the opportunity of establishing the fact about anything.

Judge Hardy's contributions to the Brantford library were memorialized with a plaque in 1956 when new steps were dedicated to make the approach more functional. His young grandson, Hagood Hardy, who later became a notable musician and composer, was present and spoke briefly about the tribute to his grandfather. The Carnegie library continued in operation until a new building opened in 1992.

An earlier post on Edwardian library buildings in Ontario

Thursday, August 12, 2021

Brockville 1904 Carnegie library

At the turn of the 20th century, library grants from the foundation Andrew Carnegie had created became readily available for Canadian municipalities. Carnegie believed in the efficacy of public libraries to improve society and in the ability of local governments to better the lives of all residents. In order to qualify for a grant, a municipality submitted a letter outlining its local need for library service. Carnegie required local governments to provide a building site, provide ten percent of the construction cost each year from public taxation for the library's future operation, and allow free access for residents. These were generous terms, and 125 Canadian cities successfully obtained and built Carnegie libraries.

Brockville was one such community, a small market town in rural Eastern Ontario with a population of 8,940 according to the 1901 Canadian census. After receiving a sizable $17,500 grant in April 1903, the city opened a new building on 13 August 1904 at the corner of Buell and George streets. Fortunately, several images of the library taken in 1906 have been preserved at the Archives of Ontario. These offer some insights into Canadian library features and architecture for smaller towns and cities during the earliest period of the Carnegie library building era.

Before the First World War, the organization of interior space and the interrelationships between staff and patrons underwent a dramatic change. Improved library functions, new programs, and public access arrangements were under active development: children's services, improved reference service, better classification and cataloging schemes, and open access to collections were all

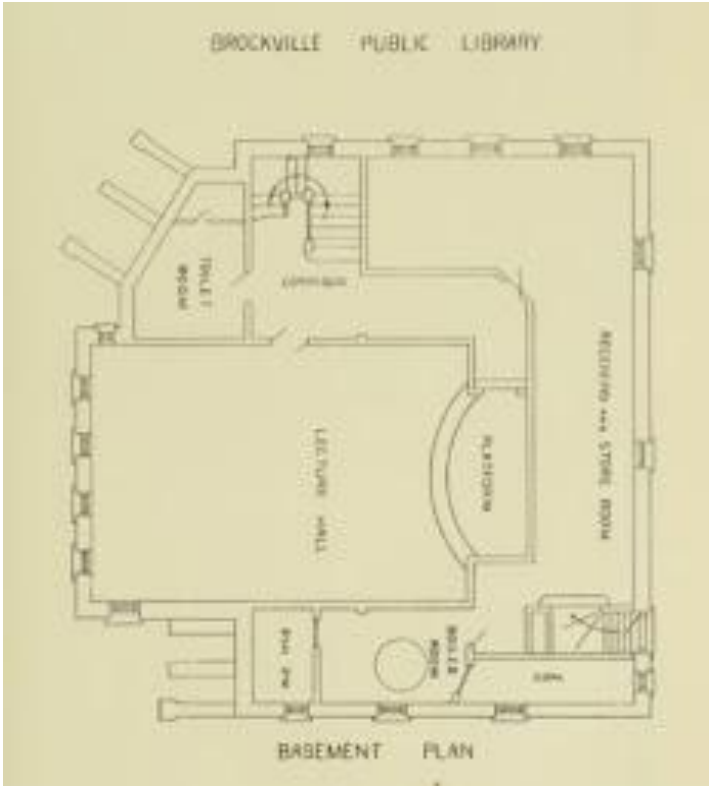
becoming new features. Reliance on long-standing library conventions — the emphasis on physical custody and storage of books, use of printed catalogues and leaflet updates for holdings, closed stacks, surveillance of public reading rooms, the use of indicators (a British practice) for circulation status in lending departments, and occasional lectures or evening classes for the technical education of working classes (an inheritance from mechanics' institutes) — was ebbing. A more 'modern' public library as we know it today was emerging that stove to connect people with books and promote an educational ethos to improve its local citizenry. Architectural features of Carnegie exteriors became all too well known for their Beaux-Arts style featuring classical columns, steps, porticos, and domes. It was an exuberant architectural style with classical lines and elements that promoted civic grandeur and acknowledged the intellectual heritage of Graeco-Roman civilization.

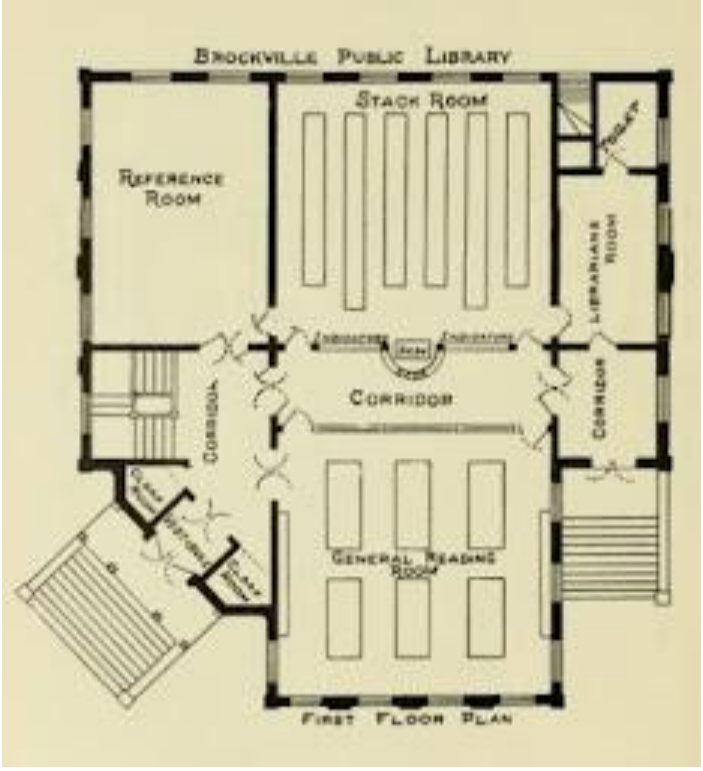
Brockville had enjoyed modest library service for several decades. The Brockville Mechanics' Institute was founded in 1842 and incorporated in 1851. A report from 1858 indicated it held about 800 volumes. It was a membership library requiring an annual subscription. In the early 1880s, the institute fell on hard times and underwent a reorganization to receive provincial grants. Eventually, after 1895, the Brockville town council passed a by-law establishing the Brockville Public Library as a free library open to local residents without charge at the point of access. At this point, the city's library board and staff were among the most energetic in Ontario. One board member, Edward A. Geiger, a railway agent, attended the American Library Association meeting in Montreal in 1900 and attended a small meeting of leading librarians and trustees that led to the founding of the Ontario Library Association in the following year, 1901. Another member, Judge Herbert S. McDonald, became an OLA councillor. Brockville's librarian, Carrie Anne Rowe, presented a paper on "Useful Methods for Small Public Libraries" at the second annual meeting in Toronto.

In a 1902 report by Lawrence Burpee, "Modern Public Libraries and their Methods," Brockville reported holdings of almost 10,000 volumes and a circulation of 40,000 items per year. The library staff numbered three, and holdings were recorded in a card and printed catalogue for the librarian's use. An "indicator" recorded circulation, usually a board in the lending section indicating by numbers or colours which books were currently lent out or available in the stacks. Indicators were suitable for more limited "closed access" collections but took up considerable space and were giving way to "open access" and book-card charging systems. Due to lack of space, there was no separate children's section, and an age limit of fourteen was in force.

The library's architect, Benjamin Dillon, was active in eastern Ontario and had experience with schools, churches, and public buildings in the region. The new Carnegie library featured pressed red brick, grey stone, and a slate roof. It had a corner entrance and a tetraportico supported by four columns topped by a

prominent triangular pediment. Keystones decorated the windows. “Public Library Reading Room” was engraved above the entrance. With raised basements, there were the obligatory ten front steps from the sidewalk to reach the main floor. The building measured 61 ft. x 65 ft., just short of 4,000 sq. ft. A central corridor led to a small reference room (17 ft. x 26 ft.), a general reading room (26 ft. x 28 ft), and a circulation desk that separated users from books in the stack area (26 ft. x 28 ft.). Rooms had suspended lighting from high ceilings. Brockville continued to rely on indicators to display the status of stack items., but this type of library device was in declining use in Canada. There was free access to the reference collection housed in glassed-in shelving, but the general circulating collection was only available through staff retrievals. Stairs to the lower level led to a large lecture 47 ft. x 27 ft. hall; however, there was no separate street entrance/exit from the basement, a serious defect considering this large room could hold more than a hundred people. Coal powered the building’s hot water heating during the winter. The building was an early version of Carnegie libraries, built to local standards of the day. There were a few drawbacks in terms of service. It was a compartmentalized plan with a significant portion of space devoted to corridors and stairs. There was no separate children’s department.




BROCKVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
STACK ROOM
REFERENCE ROOM
TOILET
LIBRARIANS ROOM
CORRIDOR
CORRIDOR
CORRIDOR
GENERAL READING ROOM
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

BROCKVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY.
THE REFERENCE ROOM.

Among the members of the library board when the library opened were the Rev. H.H. Bedford-Jones (Chair), R.H. Lindsay (Vice-Chair), Mr. Edward A. Geiger (Secretary-Treasurer), Judge Herbert S. McDonald, Dr. A.J. Macaulay, W.C. McLaren, Mayor Samuel J. Geash, Albert Abbott, and R. Laidlaw. Miss Carrie Row continued as the librarian until she moved to Toronto in 1907.

Brockville's building made a reorganization to open access or children's work difficult. A report in 1910 by Patricia Spereman, a library assistant in the Ontario Department of Education who travelled to smaller libraries to introduce children's services and the Dewey Decimal system, indicates a slow adoption of new methods especially removal of the age limit and open access service.

In this library there are about 13,000 volumes. I gave instructions in the cataloguing and classified all the library, as well as establishing a Children's Department. The Library Board at that time were not very favourable to having the children become members of the Library, and an age limit existed of 14 years. [I]Gave one "Story Hour," with an attendance of about 80 children. This Library is very fortunate in having a good librarian [Margaret Stewart], who is not afraid of work. She has undertaken to carry on the work of the Children's Department as well as finishing the cataloguing, all this without assistance.

Within a few years, the staff shelved and catalogued children's books separately and held a weekly story hour. Many teachers cooperated by sending their pupils to the library for assistance in writing their compositions. One of the main disadvantages of the original building had been overcome.

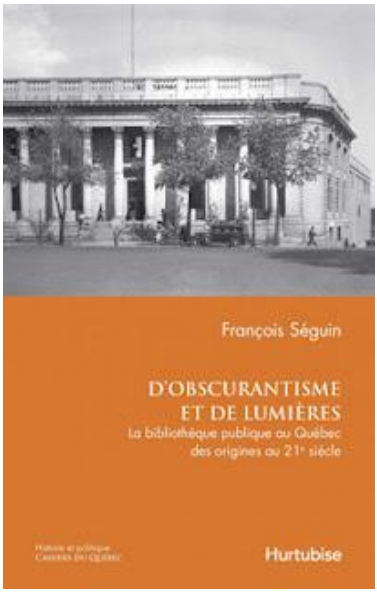
Over the following decades Brockville's population grew slowly — the 1971 census recorded just under 20,000 people. The Carnegie library also remained substantially unchanged until a small addition was made at that time in 1971. Two decades later, in the mid-1990s, the library was completely remodeled and enlarged with a new entrance adorned with a pediment. This new wing retained many of its original external architectural elements (e.g., symmetry) which were considered heritage features.

My post on Edwardian public libraries in Ontario

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

D'obscurantisme et de Lumières: La Bibliothèque Publique au Québec by François Séguin (2016)

D'obscurantisme et de Lumières: La Bibliothèque Publique au Québec, des Origines au 21e Siècle by François Séguin. Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise (Cahiers du Québec, no. 168), 2016.



The presence of libraries in Quebec stretches back almost four centuries; their history is complex and plentiful. Now, François Séguin has composed a comprehensive and noteworthy history of libraries used by the public on various terms from the 18th to the 21st century. The author worked for many years in Montreal's public libraries and has witnessed firsthand the developments over the last forty years. As a historical work, the focus is primarily on the era before 1950; the progress made after the Quiet Revolution is dealt with more briefly. The title reveals the fundamental theme of enlightened progress impeded by conservative elements opposed to the democratization of library access to public reading and knowledge. The author explores why predominantly French-speaking Quebec has undergone an ideological/political library struggle that was not present in other Canadian regions. Yet, there are similarities with English-speaking counterparts: like other North American library developments, the manifestations of the "public library" in Quebec has passed through periods of private, semi-private, and tax-supported services that ranged from the exclusionary use of shareholder/subscribers to municipal entities usually free to local/regional residents. It is this eventful passage that will fascinate many readers.

A summary of the book's twelve chapters must, of course, not do justice to the depth of Séguin's scholarship and his ability to provide an appealing narrative based on the history of individual libraries. An introductory chapter briefly outlines private and institutional libraries in New France before the British conquest in 1760. The establishment in 1632 of the Bibliothèque du Collège des Jésuites was a significant highlight of the French regime, but it was not for public use. The concept of public use and literacy growth was demonstrated by the establishment of small subscription libraries, commercial lending libraries,

reading rooms, newsrooms, and mechanics' institutes (instituts d'artisans) in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The appeal of these organizations to different clienteles is outlined in the following three chapters, 2 to 4. These libraries were utilized mainly by urban elites, professionals, and people engaged in business. Before the province of Lower Canada was united with Upper Canada to form one British colony in 1841, the major points of interest were:
1764 — Germain Langlois forms a commercial circulating library at Quebec;
1779 — British Governor Haldimand founds the bilingual Bibliothèque de Québec/The Quebec Library;
1828 — The establishment of Mechanics' Institute of Montreal (now the Atwater Library).

At this point, 1841-42, an extraordinary French visitor from the United States, Alexandre Vattemare, an exponent of free public libraries and the universal distribution of reading through exchanges of books, arrived (chapter 5). In Montreal and Quebec, he proposed the union of local societies into one institute that would form a library, museum, and exhibition halls bolstered by his exchange plan. Séguin devotes an entire chapter to his efforts which did not materialize but ultimately led to the formation of the Institut Canadien in 1844 in Montreal. The intellectual ferment of the early 1840s also stimulated a response from conservatives anxious to block liberal, secular ideas that might threaten the conservative elite and the Catholic Church's authority. Two chapters (6 and 7) explain the problems encountered by the Institutes Canadiennes in Montreal and Quebec and the development of the parish library (bibliothèque paroissiale) by Catholic authorities. For a century to come, the parish libraries were open for readers, but their organizers placed priority on a rigid system of morality that taught acceptance and passivity in social and political matters. Orthodoxy was more important than the liberal sponsorship of public lectures, debates, and circulating collections that the institutes promoted. The opening of the "Œuvre des Bons Livres" in Montreal by the Sulpician Order in 1842 signalled decades of conflict between the two philosophies while the church succeeded in establishing its hegemony over public reading and defeating the philosophy of the two institutes. The Catholic hierarchy was determined to stiffle the influence of "bad books" by providing "good" ones.

After Confederation in 1867, the Sulpicians began to play an important role in championing publicly authorized reading (chapter 8), notwithstanding the proclamation of an 1890 provincial Act (seldom used) that authorized municipal corporations to maintain public libraries. When Montreal's civic authorities failed to secure funding from Andrew Carnegie to establish a public library, the Sulpicians founded the famous Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice for the public and scholars. Eventually, in 1967, its collections became part of the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec and later, after 2002, the provincial government integrated its resources with the Grande Bibliothèque, one of the busiest public libraries in Canada. The formation of the "GB" owed much to the sponsorship of Lucien

Bouchard, the leader of the Premier of Quebec between 1996-2001. This chapter of *D'obscurantisme et de Lumières* underscores the author's general theme and how social and political elements impact public library development.

The Saint-Suplice Library was a remarkable beaux-arts style building, but it was followed shortly afterwards by an equally imposing edifice in the same architectural style, the Bibliothèque municipale de Montréal, which opened in 1917. By the turn of the twentieth century, there were gradual social, economic, and political forces underway that would eventually undermine the dominance of the parish library in local communities as well as the authority of the clergy in determining collection building. English-speaking minorities, especially in major urban centres and the Eastern Townships, evoked the rhetoric of the Anglo-American public library movement, which embraced municipal control and free access at the entry point for public libraries. Séguin charts the course of this inexorable movement in three chapters, 9 to 11. In Montreal, the Fraser Institute, Quebec's first free library for the public, opened in 1885, followed by anglophone public libraries in Sherbrooke, Knowlton, and Haskell. Westmount opened another free library in 1899. Even a small francophone municipality, Sainte-Cunégonde, founded a free library immediately before Montreal annexed it in 1905. However, Montreal's municipal public library on Sherbrooke Street grew slowly because financial resources from the city for collections and staffing were in short supply during its first half-century of existence. Children's work and a film service were not introduced until a quarter-century after the library opened. After the Second World War, the forces of urbanization, secularization, and the unique national identity of Quebec began to change the province's political culture and introduced a new important player in public library development--the provincial government.

The book's final chapter (11) deals with the growth of public libraries after 1959 when the province passed a modest provincial law for public libraries authorizing municipal establishment and control of library services. Regional libraries were planned and formed, professional staffing was encouraged, improved revenues from local government were secured, new branch libraries opened, and new library associations formed that emphasized social issues, such as intellectual freedom. In the early 1980s, Denis Vaugeois, the Minister of Cultural Affairs, emphasized library development with a five-year development plan that improved infrastructure and services substantially. Yet, when the province rescinded the outdated 1959 library legislation, no new specific library act was enacted. Instead, the province moved to establish the Grande Bibliotheque in Montreal, an outstanding circulating and reference library for all Québécois. However, lacking a general law, basic principles, especially free access to resources, remains a legacy of flawed, incremental plans . The current general legislation, one concerning the Ministry of Culture and Communications, has governed public libraries since 1992. Séguin entitles his chapter on the twentieth century "un laborieux cheminement," an appropriate designation.

D'obscurantisme et de Lumières is a rich narrative firmly focused on the institutional development of libraries and their public value in terms of access to books, the intellectual or recreational content of collections, and a broad range of formats that have challenged the dominance of print after the first decades of the 20th century and the popularity of radio. Séguin uses many documentary sources to illustrate his chapters: quotes from bishops, politicians, and librarians; newspapers such as *Le Devoir*; personal correspondence; municipal debates; government reports; and, of course, library reports. Influential American practices, such as the Dewey Decimal Classification and the evolution of library science education in degree-granting universities, are evident.

But several decisive post-1950 changes are not in evidence. There is little in the book about societal changes, for example, the transformation to electronic-virtual-digital libraries, the "Information Highway" of the 1990s, gender roles (especially the predominance of males in administration), the image of the library or librarians in films or television that reflected societal views, or the effects of library automation and efforts to network libraries for collective usage. Perhaps a few in-depth case studies of major libraries outside Montreal might have been used to illustrate library progress. For example: more emphasis on how the Institut Canadien de Québec, which initially accepted the church's authority on morality and orthodoxy, then evolved in a singular way into Quebec City's public library after municipal control in 1887; or, how the regionalization of rural library service proceeded after 1960. The use of informative sidebars on Montreal's two library schools, influential librarians (e.g., Ægidius Fauteux), children's libraries, or library associations such as ASTED or the l'Association des bibliothécaires du Québec/Quebec Library Association could advance our knowledge of library progress.

However, these observations in no way diminish the significance of *D'obscurantisme et de Lumières* as it stands. François Séguin has made a valuable contribution to Canadian library history and allows his readership to understand better the cultural forces that determined library development and the course of librarianship in Quebec. The issues I pose simply suggest that a second book by the author employing various contemporary themes would be equally helpful for those eager to know more about Quebec's remarkable library history.

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Two Fraser Valley films: *The Fraser Valley Public Library* (c. 1932) and *The Library on Wheels* (1945)

Fraser Valley Public Library, 16 mm., b & w., 12 minutes, c. 1932. British Columbia Public Library Commission. Photographed and produced by H. Norman Lidster.

The Library on Wheels, 16 mm., b & w, 14 minutes, 1945. National Film Board of Canada. Produced by Gudrun Parker and directed by Bill MacDonald.

The use of 16 mm. films for the promotion of Canadian library services began in earnest with Hugh Norman Lidster during the Great Depression. He was a practicing lawyer, a councillor, and a library board member in New Westminster, BC. In 1929, Lidster was appointed to the British Columbia Public Library Commission, a position to which he made many contributions until his retirement in 1966. In addition to his local and provincial contributions, he was active on the national level and received an Award of Merit from the Canadian Library Trustees' Association in 1962. Lidster became an avid "home movie" enthusiast in the twenties and bought his first movie camera in 1930. Within a few years, he began to document local events and to promote the new Fraser Valley library regional demonstration funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York from 1930-34.

At some point, likely in 1932, Lidster decided to film the library's new book van on its travels. Fortunately, his work has been preserved; consequently, we can view many of this region's early community libraries, deposit stations, schools, its rural landscape and mountains, gravel roads, and even the old Agassiz-Rosedale ferry, which was replaced by a bridge in 1956.

The Norman Lidster Film of the Fraser Valley book Van c. 1932

Lidster's film is essentially a promotional film to showcase the Carnegie demonstration. It shows library service in the Fraser Valley and follows the book van on its routes from community to community. The film depicts various aspects of the library service and perhaps shows a brief closeup of the energetic director-librarian, Helen Gordon Stewart, at the outset. For today's viewers, the smaller Canadian communities of the Fraser in the early 1930s appear by 21st century standards to be underdeveloped in terms of technology and economics. Even a decade and a half later, when the *Library on Wheels* was produced, this same impression prevails. Still, we must consider that Canada was less urbanized at this time: the valley's principal towns were Abbotsford and Chilliwack, each

with about 1,000 population or less. Forestry and farming were major sectors in a resource-based economy. Canada's economy was growing on an international basis, and its gross domestic product ranked with countries such as Argentina, Poland, and Spain. Postwar economic growth in commercial industry, trade, services, and tourism would, of course, introduce many changes. Today the Fraser Valley Regional Library serves about 700,000 people.

Fraser Valley book van exiting ferry, ca 1932

Serving the rural population in BC was a key goal of the Provincial Public Library Commission Lidster served on. An important BC survey conducted in 1927 recommended that larger administrative library districts based on cooperation between municipalities and school districts would best serve rural communities that could not afford to fund local libraries for improving standards. Fortunately, the Carnegie Corporation of New York awarded a grant of $100,000 to operate a multi-year library project, which commenced in 1930. A notable feature of this project was its book van that traversed an area of approximately 1,000 square miles. The van made regular stops at small community association libraries, filling stations, grocery stores, and country corners. At each stop, it displayed books on its exterior covered shelves for people, young and old, to browse.

The experiment in regional library service proved to be quite successful. At its conclusion each community voted whether to continue the regional library with local taxes. Twenty municipalities agreed to do so, and in autumn 1934, a union library (FRUL) was formally established at a ceremony held in Chilliwack. The provincial government provided additional funding to encourage growth.

The National Film Board: *The Library on Wheels*, 1945

The FVUL was a successful model. Two more regional libraries were formed in BC, one on Vancouver Island and another in the Okanagan Valley, before

Gudrun Parker, a Winnipeg born film producer who began her career with the National Film Board (NFB) during the Second World War, teamed up with the NFB director Bill MacDonald. He was a talented writer with a particular interest in conservation and outdoor sports, especially fishing. Together, they made an enjoyable reprise of the book van's travels in the Fraser throughout four weeks in 1944. The NFB crew interacted with many residents during filming. Later, MacDonald recounted: "They took us into their confidence and they told us what they thought of the library and showed us the books they liked to read." With sound, of course, the *Library on Wheels* is entertaining because it is also professionally edited. Parker, who eventually would receive the Order of Canada for her body of work in 2005, credited one source of inspiration as Richard Crouch, the chief librarian of London, Ont. Crouch travelled across Canada on a Carnegie grant administered by the Canadian Library Council during the war. He was noted for his advocacy for the role of the "library in the community."

Two years later, in 1947, Parker and Crouch collaborated again, this time to produce the NFB short film, *New Chapters*, which documented the London library's cultural and leisure activities in the Forest City. The later film received less promotion and was eclipsed in popularity by yet another bookmobile film of the same year, *The Books Drive On*, which highlighted libraries and communities in the Ontario county of Huron.

Eager Readers at book stop, *Library on Wheels*, 1945

The *Library on Wheels* proved to be an influential asset for library promoters after WWII. Proponents of regional libraries in the west, especially in Saskatchewan, used the film to establish better rural services linked by newer bookmobiles rather than truck vans. Today, both films still resonate with the spirit of our open country and Canadians' love of books.

More information on the two films and bookmobiles:

Norman Lidster's film can be viewed on YouTube here.

Watch the NFB's 1945 *Library on Wheels* at this link.

My blog on the Huron County bookmobile, Miss Huron, is at this link.

Saturday, July 18, 2020

Ontario’s Landmark Public Libraries Act, 1920

A century ago, in June 1920, the Farmer-Labour government in Ontario introduced a new public libraries act, mostly through the work of the Education Department's provincial library Inspector, William O. Carson. He had been London's chief librarian for a decade before moving to Toronto in 1916 to undertake the task of vitalizing Ontario's libraries during the difficult years of the First World War. The contemporary act he inherited dated back as far as 1882, with major revisions issued in 1895 and 1909. But, with the appearance of Carnegie buildings (125 in Ontario), better training for library assistants and librarians, and far different economic conditions facing municipalities after four decades of population growth, the provisions of the older act (which had at one time included mechanics' institutes) no longer suited a province that had suffered rural depopulation and was becoming increasingly urbanized after the 1911 census.

William O. Carson and the Ontario Public Libraries Act 1920

Carson spent his first few years in the small library office of the Education Department at Queen's Park studying the province's public libraries, the free ones with mandatory library tax rates and the association-membership ones that depended on fundraising for their operations. By early 1920, an entirely new act with revisions to older sections was ready to be introduced into the legislative process for three readings. The new law came into effect on June 4th, 1920, after a relatively easy passage through the Ontario legislature. No less than George Locke, Toronto's energetic chief librarian, pronounced that the new act was the greatest step forward in public library development on the continent. Mary J.L. Black was also enthusiastic, writing that the act "may well be considered as the most progressive and practical Library Act that has ever appeared in any statue book, the world over."

The new act was indeed praiseworthy, but not perfect; it served Ontario's public library community well until it was replaced by an entirely new act in 1966. The

prominent feature of the new act was its provision for local financing of free public libraries. Previously, library boards had relied on a mandatory minimum municipal levy of one half-mill on the assessed valuation of property (real or personal) in their communities. Of course, municipalities varied in population, local assessments differed as did tax rates, and many local councils considered the half-mill to be a maximum rather than a minimum. Consequently, Carson introduced a mandatory annual minimum fifty cents per capita levy for municipalities, police villages, and school sections where free libraries existed. The rationale: libraries served people, not property! Municipal councils were also authorized to increase the "public library rate" by majority votes (a seldom used clause as it turned out).

The new act adhered to the concept of enabling municipal based library service. Following the successful vote of eligible electors, a board could be established; these boards, usually composed of nine members in cities, were governed by appointed members and the appointing powers were divided among school and municipal authorities to ensure the semi-independence of each board. For rural library development, the province continued the long-standing tradition, dating back to 1851, of allowing the formation of association (membership) libraries that elected boards of five to ten members from its membership each year. Association libraries were not eligible for the minimum fifty cents per capita rate and had to subsist on members' fees and fundraising events for their operations. Often, Carson's departmental travelling library sections supplied associations with small boxes of books as supplemental reading for their membership.

For its role in library development, Ontario, through its Department of Education, the act authorized provisions for the minister (an office usually held by the sitting Premier) to pay grants to public libraries to a typical maximum of $250. These provisions encouraged local growth on a "self-help" basis:

1) city branches became eligible for grants on the same basis as main libraries, a stipulation that Toronto enthusiastically endorsed;

2) legislative regulations provided for a grant of fifty percent on book purchases up to $400 and fifty percent on periodicals and newspapers not to exceed $100;

3) a grant of $10 for a reading room open a certain number of hours a week;

4) a few special grants were set aside for small libraries and reading room service.

Carson was also able to convince the government to empower the minister of education to encourage additional services in the interest of public libraries, notably authority to maintain a library school and library institutes. Carson had lengthened the time for library education and training using the Toronto Public

Library as a practice facility. Library institutes were shorter workshop sessions aimed at improving the trustees' knowledge about modern library development. The minister also was given the right to pass regulations governing the qualifications of librarians and assistants. Carson, and other leading Ontario librarians, such as George Locke and Mary J.L. Black, considered the librarian and staff to be essential to the success of library service.

For many years, Ontario's library law was cited as a model for other provincial jurisdictions. The 1933 Carnegie sponsored report, *Libraries in Canada*, noted it was the most complete library act in Canada and could be used as a guide. However, Ontario's act had not adequately dealt with the problem of the small rural library. Union boards could be formed, but this section of the act was seldom used. The commissioners who reported in 1933 singled out Ontario's problem and pointed to the essential provisions of a "good" library act:

1) a statement of purpose for the public library;

2) a central supervising and "energizing" agency;

3) a representative and responsible local management;

4) a sure and adequate income.

Further, the three Carnegie commissioners suggested a statutory Library Commission (like the existing one in British Columbia) would strengthen the hand of the Department's library inspectorate. County and regional library amendments were also necessary to ensure cooperative efforts in rural areas. A Commission, of course, had been rejected by Ontario's government as far back as 1902. County library cooperative legislation was introduced in 1947, regional co-operative could be formed after 1957, and, eventually, county libraries were authorized in 1959. These amendments were the most significant changes to the 1920 Act over the course of forty-five years.

When the new Act of 1966 came into effect, it eliminated some prominent vestiges of the past that were features of the 1920 Act: the need for local plebiscites to establish libraries, the requirement to be a British subject, the voluntary Library Association form of governance, and the minimum per capita library rate of 1920. From the perspective of a century, the 1920 Act, although hailed at the time as a modern advancement, fell short in vital areas. From the very first, a Michigan librarian familiar with Canadian and American conditions, Samuel Ranke, estimated that $1.00 per capita would be more a more suitable rate. The new act lacked provisions to permit, or encourage, cooperative services between library boards, except for the union board clause. Trustees, for the most part, need not look beyond their community. Library operations in smaller places frequently were in the hands of self-trained local appointments because there was

no requirement to hire trained personnel. Boards assumed a "hands-on approach" and made decisions about book selection and finances. Reappointment of trustees, rather than an infusion of new blood, was standard practice.

In many respects, the 1920 Act consolidated previous ideas about how library service should develop within Ontario's municipal structure, which dated to 1849. But future progress in Ontario would depend on ideas and attitudes quite unlike the ones which characterized the successes of the public library movement from 1880-1920. By 1950, it was evident changes would be necessary and new library amendments began to appear with regularity. Indeed, Ontario's municipal framework began to undergo similar reviews to accommodate changing demographics and social issues.

The full text of the act is available on the Internet Archive.

Tuesday, January 07, 2020

Les bibliothèques canadiennes, 1604-1960 by Antonio Drolet (1965)

Les bibliothèques canadiennes, 1604-1960 by Antonio Drolet. Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1965. 234 p., tables.

Antonio Drolet, n.d.

Antonio Drolet was born in Québec City on July 31, 1904, and studied at the Petit Séminaire de Québec where many young Catholic clerics were educated. He earned his BA at Université Laval in 1925. Eventually, he chose a career outside religious studies: he became an academic librarian at Laval. He also performed duties as a Secretary to the respected literary critic and rector of Laval, Camille Roy. Later, he organized and directed work at the library in the Faculty of Medicine at Sainte-Foy from 1955-1961. In 1964, Drolet became chief librarian at the Archives of Québec. During his career, he published important works, notably *Bibliographie du roman canadien-français 1900–1950* in 1955 and *Les Bibliothèques canadiennes 1604–1960* in 1965 along with many scholarly articles on libraries, especially in the vicinity of Quebec City (see below). Drolet died on June 30, 1970.

Antonio Drolet's history of Canadian libraries

Antonio Drolet's history of Canadian libraries was a groundbreaking work in Canadian library historiography and owed much to his knowledge of Canadian bibliography and his own scholarly work on libraries and book collections in the province of Quebec. In attempting to encompass the development of our nation's libraries from the arrival of French explorers to the postwar period after 1945, the author was examining an area of research that was, for the most part, a patchwork of regional histories and unsynthesized commentaries. Drolet was largely successful in striving to weld these pieces together in a sweeping historical survey of Canadian library development. More than half a century later, some parts may seem dated or insubstantial due to subsequent research, nevertheless, *Les Bibliothèques canadiennes* is still a reliable, concise account which blends Drolet's narrative and analysis, notably his portrayal of the considerable influence of the clergy in Quebec's public library development. Drolet was steadfast in his

account of the historical ascendancy of public services at a time when Quebec's politics and culture in the 1960s -- the Quiet Revolution -- was fundamentally changing life in Quebec. Drolet seems to be deeply aware of this trend and, as a result, his general work remains an important starting point in historical inquiry, especially for the evolution of libraries in Quebec.

Drolet chose to divide Canada's library chronology into three parts, from (1) the early libraries in the French colony established by Samuel Champlain to the British military victories in the Seven Years' War at Québec City and Montréal (1604-1760), (2) the British colonial period to Confederation, to (3) the entire post-Confederation period (1867-1960) of developing nationhood. These dates mirror the earlier dominance of political history in Canada's past established by Canadian historians in the first part of the 20th century and the ideas that emerged from its colonial experience and the aftermath of Confederation. Of course, Drolet composed his work before the rise of new social history in Canadian universities that involved a variety of studies on urbanism, ethnicity, labour, demographics, regional or societal structures, and more complex patterns of chronology. It was sometimes called "history from below" or "history with the politics left out." This new history used different viewpoints and source materials and did not focus on attempts at a national synthesis. Drolet was composing his narrative at a time when French-language historians at two major universities, Laval and Montreal, were beginning to re-interpret Quebec's history using professional standards to investigate the province's social and cultural development beyond the traditional nationalist emphasis on the survival of francophone culture in a North American setting. *Les Bibliothèques canadiennes* displays an interest in print culture and book history, areas of study in their own right in relation to the field French-Canadian library history. Drolet's successors who have made authoritative contributions to Quebec's library history, such as Yvan Lamonde, Gilles Gallichan, or Marcel Lajeunesse -- have followed in this tradition of interrelating library history with printing and publishing, the history of books, literacy, reading, and intellectual development. These works reflect the new cultural historiography that became more influential on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1980s, many years after Drolet's publication appeared.

However, Drolet was also writing at a time when institutional and administrative concerns in library history -- the growth of collections, the spread of various types of libraries, or the tenure of chief administrators -- dominated local narratives, especially in American and Canadian English-speaking accounts. Drolet chose to focus on types of libraries and their development -- a typical institutional approach that is less favoured by historians now. His contemporaries writing library history echoed the liberal-democratic premise of practicing librarians and trustees who projected the idea of public libraries financed by

municipalities and administered by trustees as a powerful force for literacy and democracy. To some extent, Drolet was not subject to this overarching Anglo-American-Canadian experience because he specialized in the course of Quebec's library development which had resisted this thinking. As he notes, even in 1930 a Liberal Premier of Quebec, Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, could state that the content of public libraries posed some threat, especially to youth (p. 173-74). However, while he adhered to the cultural-religious aspects of Quebec's library history, Drolet necessarily was concocting a national interpretation of the historical record emphasizing facts and events that often were institutional, administrative, and political in focus, thus giving weight to the progress of institutional growth.

In his first time frame, Drolet examines the libraries of New France, particularly private libraries of the colonial elite and Catholic religious institutions. The vast majority of private collections were not large and, as he notes, were often devoted to religious works, as were the libraries in churches and seminaries. He covers the entire period as one -- the reader does not get a sense of the growth of libraries in the French regime, perhaps because they were small and a "book culture" with contemporary printing presses and book stores was lacking. For institutional libraries, Drolet drew on his own published work, particularly the Séminaire de Québec (see below) which is still cited by scholars. The most important library in the French colony was the library of the Collège des Jésuites at Québec City which Drolet had published an extensive article on in 1961 (see below). He calculates that there were about 20,000 volumes in about 50 personal collections in New France (p. 25) with prominent French writers, Pascal, Descartes, and Montaigne available to readers (p. 45). He concludes his section on mostly private collections by noting the appearance of libraries for the public in North America, a trend the French colony had not experienced.

The central part of *Les Bibliothèques canadiennes* (1760-1867) is more successful in providing details that offer a sense of colonial library development including the background of difficulties inherent in Canada's burgeoning book trade, especially in Quebec. Commercial circulating libraries, subscription libraries (which Drolet terms as public, p. 88, because they did not belong to a person and attracted a limited clientele), English language mechanics' institutes and their French counterpart instituts d’artisans, school libraries, parliamentary libraries, professional libraries, public libraries of different types, parish libraries, college and university libraries begin to appear. Drolet examines the size of collections, for example, the Bibliothèque de Québec founded in 1779. The author's interest in parish libraries encouraged by the Catholic Church after 1840 stems from his earlier research (see below) and continues his observations on the importance of religion on library development in his home province. He finds the

clergy repeatedly thwarting the development of local or municipal public libraries by acting as a conservative force to actively control social and cultural institutions, especially the foundation of libraries for the public in a general sense ("bibliothèques populaires" p. 135). In two notable cases, the visit of Alexandre Vattemare in 1840-41 which resulted in the founding of the controversial L'Institut canadien de Montréal (1844-80) and the refusal to accept money from Andrew Carnegie's program to build free public library buildings at the beginning of the 20th century, the Catholic ultramontane philosophy prevailed. The development of school libraries under Egerton Ryerson and Jean-Baptiste Meilleur is also highlighted. To illustrate the growth of libraries, there is a chronological table (p. 151-54) of the foundation of many Canadian libraries during this period, perhaps a realization on the author's part that a substantial descriptive history of all library development over one hundred years was not feasible in the early 1960s. Drolet was touching the surface of library history not burrowing deeper to examine the complexities of library formation, investigating the contribution of persons (politicians, trustees, librarians), or identifying general trends or geographic differences that influenced library growth.

In his final section, Drolet moves to a national stage beyond Quebec and Ontario and covers important libraries in ten Canadian provinces. Discussion is necessarily compressed, but it engages the reader with useful information and displays the author's extensive learning and dedication to details. At the same time, the author introduces government, business, school, and academic libraries. Generally, the primacy of private and public library history lessens and types of libraries multiply. In this time frame, as might be expected because he was writing before the influence of new social and cultural history approaches, Drolet remains fixed on an institutional focus, even with library education and the development of librarianship (p. 203-04). As the formation of provincial and national library associations comes into play, he notes the bi-cultural nature of Canadian librarianship: the formation of the Canadian Library Association (still bilingual at the time of Drolet's publication) and L'Association canadienne des bibliothécaires de langue française shortly after the Second World War. There is little opportunity to consider the societal impact of libraries, although the author indicates Quebec's decision to follow the example of Canadian-American public library development in other provinces with the formation of a provincial public library law in 1959.

Les Bibliothèques canadiennes has influenced Quebec authors in the past half-century, in part because Drolet was in tune with the changes of the Quiet Revolution and the need to secularize and reinterpret library history in his home province. Conversely, Drolet's work is seldom cited in English-language publications even though it could easily serve as an introductory handbook. A

variety of reasons likely account for this neglect beyond the obvious obstacle of language and its brevity. The book's all-encompassing scope provided brief information on various types of libraries or librarians; its focus on private libraries, book collectors, and reading in Quebec did not attract researchers outside the province; some of its contents gradually became dated or known through other works; some important aspects, such as regional libraries, are scarcely mentioned; and, of course, it is now more than half a century past its original publication. Nevertheless, Drolet's history can still reward readers because the author was careful to establish his facts and confident enough to interpret more than three hundred years of Canada's past, an academic project which probably would be attempted by a collegial of effort in 2020.

Drolet's *Bibliothèques canadiennes* is available for readers at the Internet Archive of books.

Additional works by Drolet:

Antonio Drolet, “La Bibliothèque du Séminaire de Québec et son catalogue de 1782,” *Le Canada Français* 28, no. 3 (Nov. 1940): 261–266.
Antonio Drolet, “La bibliothèque de l'Université Laval,” *La revue de l'Université Laval* 7 (1952): 34–41.
Antonio Drolet, “La bibliothèque du Collège des Jésuites,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* 14, no. 4 (mars 1961): 487–544.
Antonio Drolet, “L’Épiscopat canadien et les bibliothèques paroissiales de 1840 à 1900,” vol. 29, *Rapport - Société canadienne d’histoire de l’Église catholique* (Hull, Québec: Leclerc, 1962), 21–35.

About the author:

Alphéda Robitaille, “Hommage à un historien: Antonio Drolet, 1904–1970,” *Archives: Revue de l'Association des Archivistes du Québec* 70, no. 2 (juillet-décembre 1970), 32–42. [bibliography]
Charles-Marie Boissonnault, “Antonio Drolet, bibliothécaire et historien,” *Proceedings and Transactions and of the Royal Canadian Society*, Antonio Drolet, bibliothécaire et historien (1972), 127–134.

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Toronto's Free Library: Facts for the Citizens (1881) by John Taylor

Toronto's Free Library: Facts for the Citizens by John Taylor. Toronto: n.p., signed 25 October 1881, 4 p., tables.

John Taylor was born in Leek, Staffordshire, England, in 1841. He came to Canada as a teenager with his family when he was fourteen. His early business training was with Taylor Brothers, paper makers, a firm that was at the forefront in an expanding paper industry based on the use of wood pulp. After leaving the firm, John ventured into the commission business with J.L. Morrison. He eventually established his own major factory specializing in the manufacture of soap, John Taylor & Company, on the Don River.

Taylor became a director of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute in the 1870s, showing an interest in the welfare and education of working people. He was treasurer of the Institute in 1880. He was also a member and president of the St. George's Society which sought to assist immigrants and those in need. He also entered the arena of politics, serving as an alderman and school trustee. By 1881, he was becoming a promoter of a public library in Toronto with the publication of a short booklet, *Toronto's Free Library.* Along with John Hallam, Taylor became a leading exponent of free library service for Toronto residents, although their ideas were not entirely in unison despite the *Grip* illustration caption from March 25, 1882.

Taylor's small tract begins with a statement that Toronto was in need of the intelligence a free library could provide for its future welfare and good government. Taylor, like his friend John Hallam and many others, believed in

EXCEEDINGLY HAPPY THOUGHT.

Aldermen Taylor and Hallam in the same breath—"Let us secure that splendid building for Toronto's Free Public Library. It can, it may, it must, it *shall* be done!"
And so say all of us.

cultural accessibility and the communication of ideas to society through systematic education. Books and magazines could help explain the organization and processes of government and help explain current issues. Libraries could also provide resources to study social conditions. Already, in the United States and Great Britain, libraries were in operation affording free reading to thousands of people. Taylor offers examples of libraries in America, Britain, France, and Australia to buttress his point and, to counter skeptics, asserts that "it must not be taken for granted that reading for amusement is the sole aim of a rate-supported library." As well, he offers another argument based on his view of democratic political life in North America:

Free libraries are certainty not so numerous in Great Britain as in the United States. Class distinction is much more clearly marked in the Old World than on this side the Atlantic, and that same wave of democracy that has done so much to merge classes and creeds among our neighbours will no doubt in time reach the Dominion without necessarily weakening the loyalty of the people."

Taylor, like his friend Hallam and most Ontarians, was reluctant to disassociate his promotion of libraries from the preservation of the British connection. He was more concerned with a practical scheme for Toronto.

There are two feasible methods of establishing a library from municipal funds. One plan—advanced by my colleague in the Council, Alderman Hallam—is to forestall and fund a portion of the rate so as to erect handsome and suitable buildings at once and fill (or partially fill) them with say 60,000 or 80,000 volumes the first year. The other plan would be to commence on a more moderate scale and spend the money in books, etc., as it is granted. Either way would secure a grand result for any corporation availing itself of the Act. I would advance such an establishment that the maintenance thereof would not exceed $5000 a year for Librarian, Assistants, Caretaker, gas, etc., so that the purchase account for new books, periodicals and newspapers may be as large as possible.

Taylor even suggested a civic museum could be established with the free library and that the cost to a small householder would only be about twenty-five cents a

THE WORKINGMAN'S CHANCE.

SCENE—*A gentleman's house.*

Tom Plane.—Jack, how long do you 'spose it will be before you or me owns a library like this?

Jack Square.—Not long. I expect to have something finer than this early in the new year.

Tom.—Nonsense! What do you mean?

Jack.—I mean that I'm going to vote for the Free Public Library at the same time that I mark my ballot for John Taylor as Alderman.

year, the price of one dinner at a farmer's hotel! At civic elections held at the start of the new year, in January 1883, Toronto's ratepayers voted in favour of the ballot question to establish a library thereby authorizing the city council to establish a bylaw for its creation. Like his aldermanic counterpart, John Hallam, does not reference the term "democracy." He is content to postulate that the library would ultimately contribute to a better-educated citizenry.

Taylor's contribution to the establishment of Toronto's free library was satirized by *Grip* on December 2nd, 1882. In time, Taylor, and other directors of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute, came to favour a third option, i.e., the transfer of property belonging to the Institute to the municipality for free library purposes according to Ontario's 1882 Free Libraries Act. On 29 March 1883, at a special general meeting, the Institute's directors (which included Taylor) voted to transfer all its property (and liabilities) to the city of Toronto. Later, on 20 June, the transfer deed giving legal effect was executed. The institute formally reopened on 6 March 1884 as Toronto's free library on the corner of Church and Adelaide Streets. John Taylor served as chair of the new Toronto Public Library in 1885 and continued on its Board of Management until January 1900. He died in Toronto on April 28, 1908.

John Taylor's short pamphlet is available at Canadiana Online.

Sunday, November 24, 2019

Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books (1882) by John Hallam

Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books with a Plea for the Establishment of Rate-Supported Libraries in the Province of Ontario by John Hallam. Toronto: Globe Printing Company, 1882, 36 p. tables.

John Hallam was born in Chorley, Lancashire, England, in 1833, the son of a poor workingman. When he was still a boy, he worked in a cotton mill to help his parents. In his early twenties, Hallam emigrated to Canada, arriving in Toronto in 1856. For several years he took on menial work as a labourer but managed to save money to open a small business as a hide, wool and leather merchant. Through his own exertions and business acumen he developed a thriving business that became a leading Canadian importer and exporter, including a branch plant in Winnipeg.

A political Liberal of the Lancashire type who preferred individual liberties, popular suffrage (including universal suffrage for women), and free trade, Hallam was out of step with the established Conservative norms which characterized "Tory Toronto;" nevertheless, he entered municipal politics in 1870 as an alderman, a position he held at different intervals for the next three decades. He campaigned unsuccessfully for mayor in 1900, finishing third. Hallam died shortly afterward at his residence on Isabella Street, Linden Villa. He was civic-minded and was one of the first directors of the Canadian National Exhibition which opened in 1879. Today, his original summer property in Rosedale, Chorley Park, continues to be enjoyed by Toronto residents with its quiet walkways and small gardens. Another notable civic contribution, of course, is the Toronto Public Library, one of the busiest public libraries in North America.

Because his personal interest leaned to book collecting, it is not surprising that John Hallam eventually became a prominent library promoter as well. He was treasurer of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute in 1871. His survey of libraries and

call for the establishment of free library legislation was published in early 1882, *Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books.* His pamphlet was the summary of his inquiries by letter and personal visits to England, France, and Germany in the course of his travels, particularly in 1881. Hallam had already proposed the formation of a library in Toronto at the outset of 1881 and contacted both the Minister of Education, Adam Crooks, and Premier, Oliver Mowat, about the need for enabling legislation. The alderman made a forthright statement for rate-supported public libraries in his preface:

Free public libraries, to be useful and successful, must be rate supported, and free from the tedious formalities of an educational department, and represent every phase of human thought and opinion, every class and condition of men, and be absolutely free from all political and sectarian influences. They are the institutions of the people. They must initiate, manage and pay for their support.

In the opening pages of his work, Hallam stressed the value of reading and books. "Books are the records of human feeling, opinion, action and experience; and though the mere form of such records may have differed in different ages, the desire for and creation of such records have been inseparable from the career of mankind" (p. 8). His argument ranged from the Egyptian pharaohs, the library of Alexandria, the medieval period, and modern Europe, punctuated with quotes from celebrated authors such as Cicero and Milton. He emphasized that classroom education in the schools and self-education in adult life were the keys to a successful life.

Hallam followed with a description of library progress in France, Germany, and Great Britain which was the focus of his tract. He defended novel reading in a section on Leicester and praised the work being done in Birmingham and Manchester. Liverpool, Bradford, and Preston also received his attention. He had less information on American states, Edinburgh, and Dublin, but noted the evolution of thought in public library thinking after 1850. Of course, Hallam followed the conventional contemporary interpretation of Canadian ties to Britain and its imperial economic and cultural successes unlike Goldwin Smith's view of continental linkages with the United States.

Hallam also wrote about Canadian developments, such as they were. Most of his comments were directed to Egerton Ryerson's free libraries in schools which had been mostly "abandoned" by the government of the day. However, Hallam cleverly framed his central line of reasoning: "I put the question, that if a municipal tax freely voted by the people for the support of common schools works wisely and well, surely a rate for libraries must work in the same way" (p. 28). In a few paragraphs he sketched a plan for provincial legislation in Ontario

to allow the formation of free public libraries. This would require the successful vote of the ratepayers in a city, town, or village to permit a suggested annual 1/2 mill rate, an expression of direct democracy through a referendum. He does not provide further details (such as the administration of libraries) but does provide insight into what he, a good liberal Victorian committed to cultural elevation, felt should be in the circulating collections.

I think the ingredients of such a library should be as general, as attractive and as fascinating as possible. I would have in a library of this sort a grand and durable foundation of solid, standard, fact literature. I would have a choice, clean-minded, finely imaginative superstructure of light reading. The vulgar, the sensuously sensational, the garbage of the modern press, I would most scrupulously avoid, just as I would avoid dirt and the devil. I would have everything in a library of this kind useful and captivating; mentally speaking, there should be nothing nasty and nothing dull in it. Next to dirty reading, for badness of effect, is dull reading. (p. 30-31)

Hallam then closed his arguments by summarizing his rationale for free library support. He maintained that free libraries were "profitable investments" for the public that developed a taste for reading, offered paths of study, and diverted working-men from street corners or "dram shops." They introduced the great minds of the past to new readers, promoted public virtue and enlightenment, and influenced social order, respectability, and intelligence. Thus, "by developing these virtues amongst the multitude, they [libraries] must necessarily diminish the ranks of those two great armies which are constantly marching to gaols and penitentiaries, and in the same ratio they must decrease the sums of money which ratepayers have to provide for the maintenance of those places" (p. 31). Ultimately, he contended that it was wiser to pay for intelligence than to tolerate ignorance.

John Hallam and his fellow alderman, John Taylor, were important promoters of free public library service in Toronto. Taylor also published a short tract, *Toronto's Free Library*, earlier in 1881, proposing the adoption of rate support of a 1/2 mill on the dollar. But Hallam's work was more detailed and specific about the purpose and benefits of free libraries. Although he does not reference the word "democracy," he calls upon the active, direct participation of citizens through the municipal referendum process to authorize the formation of libraries and thereby support the concept of rate-support for collections to be available freely to citizens. The library as a separate institution would be managed publicly, separate from the school system. Its resources could assist citizens to make better decisions than being left in ignorance, a vital ingredient in democratic life. Through the activity of self-education people could learn more about science and technology, business, government, medicine, and many other

subjects.

Canada's essential democratic values in the British North America Act were "peace, order, and good government." Good government conducted in an orderly fashion through public consent was a keystone of political thinking during this period. The idea of common good through the power of popular government buttressed by public support shines through Hallam's *Notes*. This democratic impulse is similar to the development of Ontario's school system -- the advancement of knowledge and learning in an expanding population and electorate.

Hallam's efforts were rewarded when the Ontario government enacted the Free Libraries Act in 1882, an earlier blog I posted in November 2017. Toronto availed itself of this enabling legislation in January 1883 by a two-thirds majority of eligible votes cast, 5405 to 2862. Of course, in a city of 90,000 population, property or income qualifications excluded many workers from voting in annual municipal elections or on referenda. Not surprisingly, Hallam became the library's first chairperson later in the same year. His friend, John Taylor, followed as chair in 1885.

CALLING UP THE CHIMNEY.

AND "GRIP" HOPES SANTA CLAUS WILL HEAR AND HEED.

On 24 December 1881, the satirical magazine, *Grip*, invoked the spirit of Christmas on behalf of a free library in Toronto. It commented on a drawing that "Santa Claus shall not fail to bring it in due time," a prediction that proved to be correct.

A short contemporary biography on John Hallam from the mid-1880s is available in George Maclean Rose's Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography.

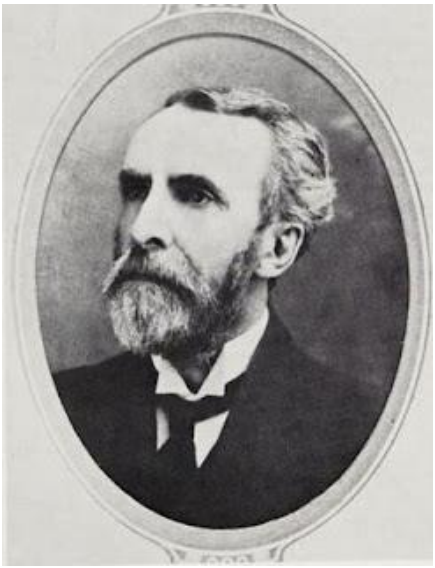
John Hallam's Notes by the Way on Free Libraries can be read at the Internet Archive.

Sunday, November 17, 2019

Les Bibliothèques Populaires (1890) by Eugène Rouillard

Les Bibliothèques Populaires by Eugène Rouillard. Québec: L.-J. Demers & Frère, 1890. 61 p.

Eugène Rouillard, n.d.



Eugène Rouillard was a man of many talents. He was born in Québec City in 1851 and died there in 1926 after a long career as a notary, journalist and writer, civil servant, and geographer. He studied at the Université Laval from 1872-75 and graduated with a degree in law. Although he was notary at the beginning of his career, he turned to journalism as a writer and editor of newspapers and then to work in government positions for three decades. In his government positions he dealt with a wide variety of issues, such as land sales, colonization issues, and lawsuits. Rouillard came to be well respected by contemporaries: he became a member of the Société du Parler Français au Canada, the Geographical Society of Quebec, and, in 1915, the Royal Society of Canada. He was grounded in the political life of his home province and his journalistic and civil service background familiarized him with Anglo-Saxon concepts of government and civil society with respect to public services. He was the author of a number of books: *Our Rivers and Lakes* (1895); *The White Coal: The Water-Powers of the Province of Quebec* (1909), and an important work on public libraries which will be discussed here.

Rouillard was one of a number of Canadian library promoters agitating for free public libraries after 1880. John Hallam, in Toronto, was notably successful after publishing his *Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books with a Plea for the Establishment of Rate-Supported Libraries in the Province of Ontario* in 1882. The Saint John Free Library, which opened in 1883, owed much to the work of Colonel James Domville and a committee of women headed by Miss Manning

Skinner. In Montreal, the bequest of Hugh Fraser led to the establishment of the Fraser Institute, open free to the public in 1885. There many other people in localities across Canada--enough to label their activity as the "public library movement." By 1891, Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec had all passed provincial laws enabling municipalities to support free public libraries through regular taxation.

Les Bibliothèques Populaires (1890) appeared at a time when public library development in Canada, especially Quebec, was at an early stage. There were a variety of interpretations about "*bibliothèques populaires"*, i.e. "popular libraries" or "libraries for the people" as they were known in Europe, especially France. These libraries usually concentrated on recreational rather than educational collections. In North America, public libraries might be regarded simply as library that was not a personal collection, as libraries for public access resulting from private initiatives (e.g., the Fraser Institute opened in Montreal), as libraries established by an organization requiring small fees for public use, or as municipally rate-supported public institutions that allowed local residents free access to reading materials at the point of entry.

It was this last sense that drew Rouillard's interest and led him to publish his pamphlet promoting public libraries in the same year that the Quebec provincial government, under the premiership of Honoré Mercier, was about to issue legislation authorizing cities, towns, and villages to support free libraries (or library associations and mechanics' institutes) through taxation (54 Vic., chap. 34, sec. 1-3). The promotion of free public libraries -- primarily a British and American ideal in 1890 -- might be construed as liberal politics. But it seems that Rouillard leaned more to the reformist politics that the Mercier government practiced in asserting Quebec's position in Confederation. Rouillard repeatedly mentions that free libraries complemented the evening courses for the working class that Mercier's nationalist party had created: "En un mot, la bibliothèque est le complément indispensable de l'école; l'une ne peut aller sans l'autre" (p. 18). Rouillard contended that the state owed the working class improved educational opportunities.

In two short sections, Rouillard surveys the development of free public libraries in the United States (p. 26-36). He was particularly impressed by the Chicago and Boston libraries which had grown rapidly after the 1850s. Magnificent donations to build libraries by John Jacob Astor (New York) and Andrew Carnegie (Pittsburgh) also drew his admiration: "les millionnaires qui se font non seulement un devoir, mais encore un honneur et une gloire de doter leur ville natale d'une bibliothèque à l'usage du peuple" (p. 31). Also, American states had established state laws that permitted municipalities to fund public libraries on an

unprecedented scale. He wrote that Canada lagged far behind America both in philanthropic efforts to establish libraries and in government support.

Developments in Europe were also explored. He notes that fourteen free popular libraries already were receiving city council grants in Paris. In Britain, public library legislation had been introduced years before in 1850. Rouillard's argumentation went beyond the free distribution of reading material in libraries. He claimed that many cities and towns in England, France, Switzerland, Belgium, and Germany offered regular evening courses and public speakers who gave their time and their knowledge for free as well.

But in Quebec, there was much work to be done to reach a similar state enjoyed by working-class people in the United State and Europe. "Dans la province de Québec — il faut bien le confesser — nous sommes encore sous ce rapport dans la première enfance" (p. 45). By comparison, Ontario was comfortably ahead: there were several free libraries and a host of libraries and evening classes of varying degree in mechanics' institutes. Rouillard accepted the idea that the education of the people was a legitimate concern of localities: "Aussi, je prétends que la ville qui veut avoir une bibliothèque chez elle doit intervenir et payer sa quote-part des frais généraux" (p. 57). Legislative grants from provincial governments were not incentive enough, each city or town must do its part. The generosity of Andrew Carnegie might not be matched in dollars, but there were rich men from the ranks of commerce and industry in Quebec who might be expected to support libraries. Rouillard concluded that the idea of popular libraries that had been launched was too noble, too big, too beautiful, and too patriotic not to catch on and flourish in the future (p. 61).

The pamphleteer made a good case in 1890, but it would be many decades before Montreal would adopt the public library concept he was advocating. At this time, the predominant position of most French Canadian leaders espoused the idea of a separate national identity for the Québécois people rather than the adoption of Anglo-American conventions. When a proposal to use a $150,000 Carnegie grant promise for a new central library was floated by the mayor of Montreal in 1901, it was not accepted. The opening of a new municipal public library building on Sherbrooke Street in 1917 was of long gestation. By this time, Rouillard's treatise, grounded in the political life of Quebec in 1890, was less relevant. Nevertheless, today, when thousands of people enter the Grande Bibliothèque on Montreal's De Maisonneuve Boulevard every week, one can see that Rouillard's fundamental insight and rationale for the provision of free municipal libraries more than a century ago -- the expansion of knowledge in his home province -- was justified. In this respect, his work will reward students of library history and deepen our knowledge about the development of Canadian

public libraries.

Eugène Rouillard's work is online at the Internet Archive

Rouillard's biography is available in English and French at the Dictionary of Canadian Biography site.

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

The Library, the School and the Child (1917) by John Whitehall Emery

The Library, the School and the Child by J.W. Emery. Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1917. ix, 216 pages, illus. Published version of Emery's Doctor of Pedagogy dissertation at the University of Toronto.

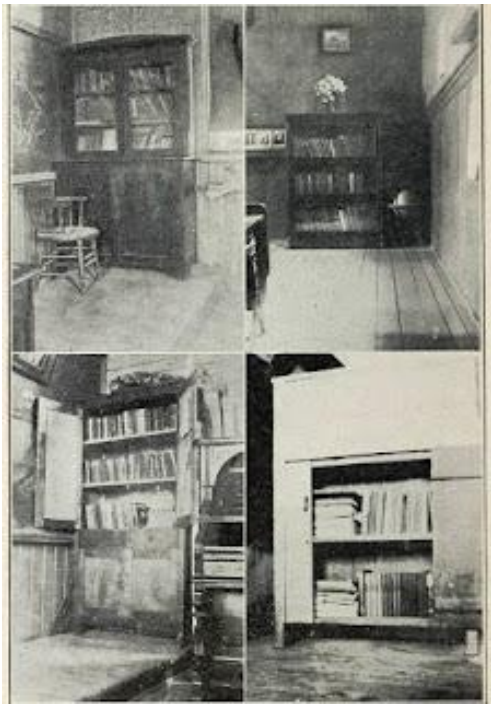
John Whitehall Emery was born in 1871 in New Sarum, a rural community southeast of London, Ont. He went to school locally and graduated from high school at Aylmer Collegiate Institute. Then he taught public school in Elgin County until he entered the University of Toronto in 1893. Shortly after, he recommenced teaching science at high schools in Kemptville and Port Hope for several years before returning to Toronto in 1902-04 to earn his bachelor's degree. He continued teaching, notably at the Stratford Normal School for teachers. He earned his doctorate in 1917 and then resumed work at the teachers' training school. He also was chair and secretary-treasurer of the Stratford Public Library in the early 1920s. He died in London in 1929.

J.W. Emery graduate portrait, 1904

Emery's thesis dealt with two major topics. First, in five chapters he studied the work of public libraries for children as public school pupils and as children. Second, in his following six chapters he treated government efforts in the United States, Canada, and Britain, to provide books for the young through school libraries.

At this time, public library provision of books for schools in the USA was a prominent feature of work at Buffalo, Cleveland, and Newark. The classroom library was the preferred choice and heavily used in these cities, although a branch library in a school was an occasional option. Cooperation on a local level with teachers for a variety of reference, picture collections, and professional texts, etc., also was a common practice. Children's departments and story hours in public libraries were another topic Emery examined and he provided interesting information on subjects such as "home libraries" for students who could share books with friends. Another topic included librarians working in

playgrounds where many children who did not normally have access to books were active in the summer months.



Children's work in Canada was less developed. Activity in Canadian public libraries received attention in one chapter and remains a valuable starting point in histories. Emery surveyed pioneering efforts in many cities: Sarnia, Toronto, Ottawa, Victoria, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Westmount, and Saint John to name a few. Emery reveals some interesting statistics, for example, he notes that Winnipeg was circulating 300,000 (!!) books to children in 1915. In his opinion, Victoria "has one of the most advanced children's departments in Canada, and keeps in close touch with the schools as well" (p. 94). This is not surprising because the chief librarian, Helen Gordon Stewart (who Emery does not name) had taught in Manitoba before getting library training in New York in 1908-09 and taking up work in British Columbia.

Two chapters featured the early school libraries (mostly in township school sections) in Ontario under Egerton Ryerson and also the development of district school libraries in the United States. Emery was especially impressed with the contemporary California county system whereby schools could affiliate with the county public library system and participate in the benefits of centralized, professionally trained library services, and coordinated book purchases and distribution. However, this type of service would not develop until after his death, notably in southwestern Ontario counties, in the 1930s. He provides a good survey of current (i.e., post-1900) conditions in Ontario's rural school libraries and even provides illustrations (p. 152) to show the gradual evolution of under the direction of interested teachers.

After 1902, Ontario's provincial government reintroduced small grants (cancelled in 1888) to rural schools in order to encourage library development in 5,000 school sections. However, as Emery notes, public libraries and especially the Ontario Library Association did little to further public library-school library

cooperation despite efforts of members such as James P. Hoag, a teacher and school inspector and library promoter, and William F. Moore (OLA President in 1913-14), the Principal of Dundas High School for three decades. There is an informative short chapter on the work of several education departments in other provinces as well.

J.W. Emery's thesis came at an opportune time. In the USA, a School Libraries Section of the American Association of School Librarians was beginning its activities and after the end of WW I the Ontario Department of Education began to take more interest in teacher training in library work. Librarians, such as Jean Merchant at the Normal School in Toronto, and others were being appointed (and trained in library work) as librarians and instructors at normal schools in Ontario. This action can be attributed in part to Emery's thesis completed in 1917.

On balance, Emery found the success of school libraries was due in most part to the attentiveness and training of teachers in library work. After surveying teacher training in library methods and the libraries in normal schools (p. 160-173), which were mainly managed by the principal's secretary at each school, he recommended Ontario's normal schools follow American precedents. Emery made a number of suggestions, the most important being (p. 206-208) --
1) to have all students attend a course in library instruction that included reference work, children's literature, and rural school library administration;
2) to permanently engage a regularly qualified librarian with teaching experience for each normal school;
3) to equip each normal school with a model rural school library;
4) to establish in each of the normal schools a collection of fifty or more of the best children's picture books and story books for the very young;
5) to permit normal schools to make small loans of books or pictures to teachers of rural schools in the vicinity.

Of course, not all Emery's suggestions were adopted, but his work formed a basis for more standardized work in bringing library methods to the fore in teacher training. Although his publication was a doctorate, Emery had a pragmatic touch due to his careful survey of library conditions. His work continues to impress a century later. His suggestions for books for rural schools, such as Thompson Seton's *Lobo, Rag, and Vixen*; *Johnny Crow's Garden* by Leslie Brooke, the *Canada Year Book*, or Herrington's *Heroines of Canadian History* reached a variety of interests and ages in elementary education. Emery's bibliography of school library work is also very useful: he mentions works by early promoters such as Harry Farr in Britain, John Cotton Dana and Frances Jenkins Olcott in the USA that are important for writing the history of school libraries.

Emery's death in 1929 cut short his career before his sixtieth birthday,

nonetheless he made a lasting contribution to the development of teacher training for school libraries in Ontario.

Emery's publication is available online at the Internet Archive.

Friday, November 08, 2019

The Public Library: Its Place in Our Educational System (1912) by Edwin Austin Hardy

The Public Library: Its Place in our Educational System by Edwin Austin Hardy. Toronto: William Briggs, 1912. ii, 223 p., illus., tables, appendices. Published version of Hardy's Doctor of Paedagogy dissertation.

Edwin Austin Hardy, who was born in New Hampshire in 1867, was a teacher, author, and library advocate. When he was still a child his family moved to Uxbridge, Ontario, where he received his early education. Eventually, he received a BA at the University of Toronto in 1888. He then took teacher training and taught in Lindsay where he became a trustee at the Mechanics' Institute in 1894. Although teaching was Hardy's profession, he also promoted public libraries. In 1899, Lindsay became a free public library and Carnegie money was granted to open a new building in 1904. Hardy was one of the founders of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) in 1900 and he worked tirelessly as its Secretary from 1900–25 before serving as President in 1925–26. Hardy moved to Toronto to organize work with the Sunday Schools Associations of Ontario in 1904, to be President of Moulton Ladies' College in 1906, and then a teacher of English and History at Jarvis Street Collegiate in 1910. He retired in 1936.

Hardy was a progressive organizer in the Victorian mold and held many interests. He helped found the Toronto High School Teachers' Association in 1903 and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in 1919. He also helped found the Canadian Teachers' Federation in 1920 and was active as an officer in the World Federation of Education Associations and the Canadian Authors' Association. He was chair of the Toronto Board of Education in 1940 and pursued activities in the League of Empire and Health League of Canada. Hardy received the Order of the British Empire for his outstanding community work in 1935.

From a library perspective, Hardy's efforts in his role as secretary of OLA to promote public libraries, trustee governance, and library training were significant. But another prominent achievement was his 1912 doctorate on public libraries and an historical account of their development in Ontario. His work reviewed the development of libraries and provided an influential account of activities that libraries could undertake to improve the lives of individuals and, by extension, society. This will be the focus of my post.

Hardy arrived on the library scene at an important moment in 1895 when the Ontario legislature introduced an Act to amend and consolidate the Acts respecting Free Libraries and Mechanics' Institutes (58 Vic., Cap. 45). One section of this act provided that every free library and every Mechanics' Institute would be called a "Public Library." Hardy felt that this terminology "had something to do with their progress since [1895], especially in the developing of public interest in their management and betterment" (p. 42-43). Of course, Hardy was thinking of larger "public libraries" that were supported by mandated municipal levies raised in cities and towns rather than the vast number of smaller "public libraries" in Ontario that subsisted on membership fees, fundraising, and modest grants from local and provincial governments. Hardy foresaw a bright future for this first type of public library: "Its possibilities are only now being recognized by our legislative and educational authorities and by the public, in fact, even by library workers themselves. But it is coming to its own, slowly at first, but gathering force and speed daily, and the near future will see the public library system of Ontario as efficient as her primary and secondary school system" (p. 123-124). Despite many societal changes, Hardy's prediction for the most part has stood the test of time for more than a century.

E.A. Hardy publishes *The Public Library* in 1912

Hardy's outline of the early 20th-century library purposes, activities, and educational work, as well as the factors contributing to the success of Ontario's public libraries may seem somewhat simplistic or outdated by today's standards, but they were by no means entirely acceptable to all his contemporaries. In fact, Hardy's treatise was ahead of his time and filled with suggestions for improving early 20th-century libraries. In many ways, his thesis is representative of classic arguments and conditions that existed for more than half a century when public libraries in Ontario (and Canada) were establishing firmer, more systematic roots on a provincial basis. It was the full-blown era of the "public library movement" when enthusiastic citizens in many urban communities agitated for municipal rate-supported libraries that would allow free access to people in local communities. By the mid-1920s all of Ontario's larger cities had established free public libraries.

Concerning the purpose of public libraries (aka, today's mission statement) and its general operation, Hardy advocated that they provide 1) a selection of the "best books" of general, scientific and reference literature; 2) recreative "good" fiction which would reach a broader public; 3) books and story hours for children of all ages; 4) current periodical holdings to satisfy a variety of community interests; 5) properly classified and catalogued collections (Hardy favoured the Dewey Decimal system and card catalogues); 6) open access to collections; and 7) effective publicity ("The public must be made to know and to feel that the library belongs to them and not to the librarian or the Board", p. 80)

Concerning the important educative value of public libraries, Hardy outlined a number of activities:
Technical Education -- provision and promotion of books for engineering and industrial training
Commercial and Agricultural Education -- materials for bookkeeping, accounting, banking,
transportation, etc. to serve commercial growth and rural progress
Musical Education -- a variety materials (possibly sheet music as well)
Art Education -- books, catalogues, reproduction, photographs, etc.
Domestic Education -- resources for the home, its furnishings, maintenance, and health
Political Education -- newspapers, public documents, statues, legislative materials, etc. In an era before women were legally able to vote, Hardy was particularly keen to satisfy the needs of lawyers and students of politics (the "young men entering the field of public life", p. 94)
Medical and Legal Education -- mostly books for serious study or reference concerns
Teachers' Institutes -- materials that could bring teachers in closer touch with the public library
Local Clubs and Societies -- space for local organizations to house their holdings
Travelling Libraries -- a centre for local study groups to access the Ontario Department of Education's book service which continued until the early 1960s
Lecture Rooms in the Library -- "Lecture courses, debating societies, library institutes, and all such intellectual activities, find themselves in a congenial atmosphere in library buildings" (p. 97)
The Library and the School -- Hardy summarizes several ways that the public library and school might operate to the benefit of students and community life but did not advocate one over the other.

Concerning the successful administration and management of libraries, Hardy felt that Ontario was on the right track in several sections. It began with

contemporary *Legislative Assistance and Supervision* which was now greatly improved. Only the inadequacy of the staff in the Inspector of Public Libraries office was holding back progress at the provincial level. *Library Boards* held the power of management and were optimally representative of their communities. Educated direction by community members was an important ingredient in library success. Of course, Hardy was hopeful that board members (mostly men) "should attract the best classes of citizens" (p. 105) and provide continuity in library affairs through open-minded decision making. He admitted that *Finances* were often inadequate (especially in smaller libraries) and suggested a few remedies for added grants and incentives from governments. For *Public Library Buildings* Hardy suggested "The essential qualities to be aimed at are simplicity, convenience, facility and economy of administration" (p. 109). He offered Lindsay as an example: its radial stack plan at the rear was open to the public for browsing and it held separate small rooms on each side of the entrance for reading purposes and children.

An efficient *Librarian* was an instrumental part of public library success. "Efficiency here does not mean knowledge of books and skill in library methods alone; it implies a right spirit; a spirit of service, of tact, of open-minded alertness, of zeal and of sympathy" (p. 109). With proper *Training of the Librarian* at the recently opened summer school for librarians in Toronto in 1911, Hardy felt a good beginning had been made. But there was much work to be done in educating and training librarians in Ontario. Finally, the author concluded with some comments about *Public Sentiment and Library Organization*. Hardy foresaw that the efforts of the Ontario Library Association to arouse public support and establish better standards would be essential for future success.

Hardy had opened his thesis by developing a history of the public library in Ontario that followed along the lines of his contemporary, James Bain, chief librarian of Toronto Public Library. Together, they outlined a progressive record in Ontario from subscription libraries (aka, membership or association) libraries, Mechanics' Institutes, free libraries, and ultimately public libraries after 1895. Both men emphasized the community aspect of local library growth: a bottoms-up effort assisted by small provincial grants that gave prominence to Ontario's "public library movement" led by nonprofessional civic leaders. This was a Victorian success story in many ways, but one that could also continue to be improved in many ways. Victorians in Britain and Canada believed in cultural accessibility, social order, and a more expansive representative liberal democracy. Books, improved literacy, and reading freely attainable at a public institution such as the library was all well and good as Hardy illustrated in his epigraph to his work from Edward Edwards, the English librarian and author:

> *"To make good books of the highest order freely and easily accessible throughout the length and breadth of the land were surely to give no mean furtherance to the efforts of the schoolmaster, and of the Christian minister, to produce under God's blessing a tranquil, a cultivated and a religious people."*

Hardy, a lifelong Baptist, held strong religious views and was also active in promoting Sunday School libraries. It could be said he possessed what his American contemporaries, such as Melvil Dewey, called the "library spirit" -- the possibility of social change for the better through the educative qualities of the public library. It was a stance that would be the mainstay in public library growth in Ontario until after 1945 when social life and librarianship began to undergo many changes during a new phase of mid-century modernization that emphasized recreational aspects and new concepts related to information access that Victorians, such as Hardy, could scarcely imagine. In retrospect, he provided the most informed Canadian statement concerning the "library spirit" in speaking about its main protagonist, librarian:

> *An efficient librarian can do more with a thousand books in unfavorable quarters than a poor librarian with ten thousand in a thoroughly satisfactory building. Efficiency here does not mean knowledge of books and skill in library methods alone; it implies a right spirit; a spirit of service, of tact, of open- minded alertness, of zeal and of sympathy. Given a librarian of that spirit, trained in some adequate fashion and the public library becomes not only the handmaid of the schools, but it becomes in a very true sense 'the people's university.' It not only meets the wants which the community now feels, but reveals to it new wants to be supplied.* (p.109-10)

In time, by the 1920s, the "library spirit" that characterized work in North America in previous decades would begin to give way in Ontario to "modern methods," a unifying concept that Hardy would eventually turn to in later publications.

Hardy's published 1912 thesis is readily available online at Canadiana Online

Further reading:

John Wiseman, "'Champion Has-Been': Edwin Austin Hardy and the Ontario Library Movement," in Peter F. McNally, ed., *Readings in Canadian Library History* (Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1986), pp. 231-243.

Edwin Austin Hardy, “An Outline Program of the Work of the Ontario Library Association,” *Public Libraries; a Monthly Review of Library Matters and Methods* 6, no. 7 (July 1901): 414–418.

Edwin Austin Hardy, “A Half Century of Retrospect and Prospect; Annual Presidential Address,” *Ontario Library Review* 11, no. 2 (Nov. 1926): 41–46. [library work as "this great service of culture and happiness"]

Edwin Austin Hardy, “The Ontario Library Association: Forty Years, 1900-1940,” *Ontario Library Review* 25, no. 1 (Feb. 1941): 9–13. ["lay membership is of great importance"]

Monday, July 08, 2019

George Locke and the Toronto Public Library

George H. Locke, chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library between 1908 and 1937, was Canada's foremost librarian in the first part of the twentieth century. During this period, free public libraries and librarianship in Ontario expanded rapidly due to the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie, improvements in library education, and the influence of American library developments.

George Locke's Contributions to the Toronto Public Library

Locke's outlook in library work was guided by his Methodist upbringing, his association with John Dewey's contribution to American progressive education, and the Anglo-Canadian academic tradition of British Idealism in the late nineteenth century. These religious and intellectual strands encouraged personal action to seek solutions to improve social conditions. As director of Toronto's library system, he brought his ambitious ideas to bear in many ways most notably the building of neighbourhood branches, library service for children and young adults, formal education for librarians, and the idea of the public library as a municipal partner in the lifelong self-education of Canadians. By the end of the 1920s, Toronto's public library system was recognized as one of the best in North America and George Locke's reputation as a progressive leader had vaulted him to the Presidency of the American Library Association in 1926-27.

Although he had created a large organization that might have succumbed to bureaucratic practices and formalized centralization, he remained faithful to his moral, intellectual, and humanistic values acquired during his schooling and university career. For Locke, libraries and librarianship served the public interest by delivering lifelong knowledge and by guiding individual self-development through experiential learning and transcendent ideals. He promoted adult learning in the early part of the twentieth century when adult education became a field of study in North America.

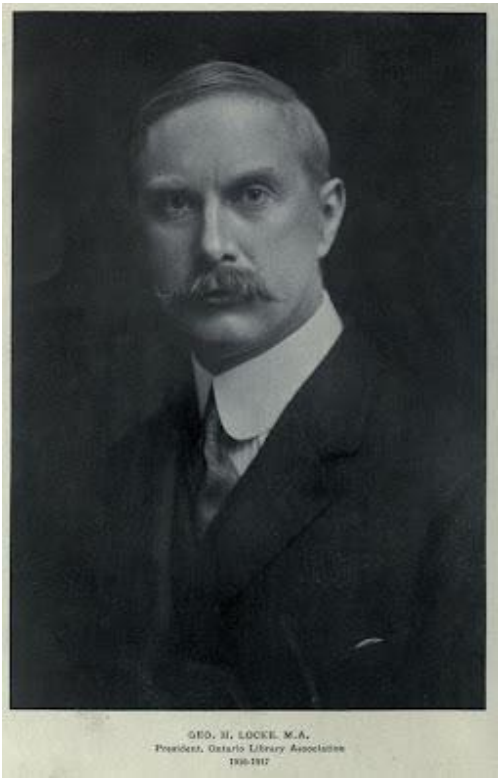
Many services Locke introduced at Toronto Public Library and national projects he undertook influenced Canadian developments in library work. After the Carnegie Corporation of New York agreed to fund a study of the conditions of Canadian libraries, Locke, along with Mary J. L. Black (Fort William) and John Ridington (University of British Columbia), became commissioners in a national inquiry that was conducted at the onset of the Great Depression. Their 1933 publication, *Libraries in Canada: A Study of Library Conditions and Needs*, was

the first in-depth report on Canadian libraries in the 20th century. Because his impact extended well beyond Toronto, the Canadian government erected a bronze plaque in his honour in 1948 in the town of his birth, Beamsville, Ontario. It reads:

Born at Beamsville and educated at Victoria College and the University of Toronto, Locke taught at Toronto, Chicago and Harvard Universities and was Dean of Education at Chicago and at MacDonald College before becoming Chief Librarian of the Toronto Public Libraries. In that position, he transformed a small institution into one of the most respected library systems on the continent. Sometime President of the American Library Association, one of the founders of the Arts & Letters Club, he was a gifted speaker and the author of books and articles on literary, historical and professional themes. He died in Toronto.

Locke's Achievements Recognized

Today, the George H. Locke Memorial Branch, the first major library building in Canada constructed after the Second World War in 1949, continues to be a testament to his career and his faith in the idea of the public library as a necessary educational service to society.



George Locke's family upbringing and academic years in Toronto, Chicago, and Boston shaped many of his ideas that he applied to libraries and librarianship.

Read about these viewpoints in my illustrated book, *George H. Locke and the Transformation of Toronto Public Library, 1908-1937* available at the Internet Archive of books. Requires Adobe Acrobat PDF software.

A review of *Libraries in Canada* is at my earlier post.

Sunday, March 31, 2019

Canadian Library Association Constitution, 1947

In June 1946, the Canadian Library Association was founded on the McMaster University campus in Hamilton, Ontario. There were about 300 persons in attendance. One of the first orders of business was the adoption of a draft constitution which had been circulated to groups across the nation. The members present agreed that the CLA would be a bilingual, national organization with annual conferences across Canada. However, the delegates balked at the draft proposal of having executives and governing councillors represent geographical considerations; instead, the members voted to have both the association's Executive and Council elected by the membership based on personal merit.

Membership in CLA was envisioned to be general, it was to be an "umbrella model" library organization. There would be institutional members interested in the promotion of library service, librarians, trustees and those serving on governing boards of libraries, as well as associate members (persons interested in librarianship and libraries). Professional interests were represented in new active Sections, six by 1950: Children's, Young People's, Trustees, Cataloguing, Reference, and Research Libraries.

The CLA's constitution was incorporated under Canada's federal Companies Act on November 26, 1947. Of course, some constitutional provisions, such as the one on Sections (VII), would be revised a number of times in the next decade. This version was published in 1947 and reflects the ideas and agreement reached at the founding meeting of CLA.

Canadian Library Association -- Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques

Constitution, 1947

Article I - Name
Article II - Object
Article III - Membership
Article IV - Officers and Executive Board
Article V - Council
Article VI - Committees
Article VII - Sections

Article VIII - Meetings
Article IX - By-laws
Article X - Amendments to the Constitution

Article I. Name
Sec. 1. The name of this body shall be the Canadian Library Association or Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques.

Article II. Object
Sec. 1. The object of the Association shall be:
(a) to promote education, science and culture within the nation through library service;
(b) to promote high standards of librarianship and the welfare of librarians;
(c) to co-operate with library associations both within and outside of Canada and with other organizations interested in the promotion of education, science and culture.
Sec. 2. The Association shall be a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-political body.

Article III. Membership
Sec. 1. Members. An individual, institution or other group approved by the Executive Board may become a member upon payment of the fees provided for in the by-laws. The membership of an individual or an institution may be suspended by two-thirds vote of the Combined Executive Board and Council; a suspended member may be reinstated by a two-thirds vote of the Board and Council in joint session.

Article IV. Officers and Executive Board
Sec 1.
(a) The officers of the Association shall be a President, a President-Elect, who shall serve as First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, an Executive Secretary, and a Treasurer. These officers, with the exception of the Executive Secretary, shall be elected at each annual general meeting of the Association, and, with the immediate Past President, shall constitute the Executive Board.
(b) All library members shall be eligible for election to the Executive Board.
Sec. 2. Duties of Officers.
(a) The President, First Vice-President, Executive Secretary and Treasurer shall perform the duties relating to their respective offices.
(b) The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees of the Association.
(c) i. The President-Elect shall serve the first year after election as First Vice-President, the second year as President, the third year as ex-officio member of the Executive Board.
ii. The President-Elect shall, in accordance with the By-laws, designate to the Executive Board for appointment, the five members of the Nominating

Committee.
(d)The President, the Executive Secretary and the Treasurer shall report annually to the membership.
Sec. 3. Duties of the Executive Board.
(a) The Executive Board shall administer the affairs of the Association during its term of office in accordance with the policies laid down by the Council.
(b) It shall review all membership applications as submitted, and be responsible for their approval.
(c) It shall review the annual estimates, and approve the annual budgets which shall be received by the Treasurer. All budgets shall be within the limit of the estimated income of the Association.
(d) It shall report promptly resolutions adopted by the Executive Board to the Councillors.
(e) It shall fix compensation of all paid officers and employees.
(f) It shall choose and appoint the Executive Secretary. This officer shall be appointed by the Executive Board at each annual Executive Board meeting.
(g) It shall designate the length of terms of appointments to Committees in accordance with the By-laws.
(h) The Executive Board shall authorize votes by mail when required.
(i) It shall fill all vacancies in office. The persons so elected shall serve until the end of the fiscal year.
Sec. 4. Term of Office.
(a) The officers and the Executive Board shall serve until the end of the fiscal year.
(b) i. No person shall serve on the Executive Board for more than three consecutive years.
ii. No person can be returned to the Executive Board after a term of three years, during the three years subsequent to the expiration of his term of office.

Article V. Council
Sec. 1. Membership. The Council shall consist of the following members to be known as Councillors:
(a) Nine members elected by the membership at large.
(b) The members of the Executive Board.
(c) Chairmen of Sections.
Sec. 2. Councillors. Members of the Council shall be Members of the Association in good standing.
Sec. 3. Duties.
(a)The Council shall be the Legislative body of the Association.
(b) It shall determine all policies of the Association and its decisions shall be binding upon the Association, its officers, and its constituted bodies.
(c) In the Council shall be vested all powers of the Association not otherwise provided for in the Constitution and By-laws.
(d) It shall inform the Executive Board of all new and revised policies.
(e) The Council shall review the action of officers, Committees and Executive

Board of the Association.
(f) It shall promptly consider questions of professional and public interest referred to it by the membership Committees, or Executive Board, and promptly act upon reports and recommendations made by the Association and its constituted bodies.
(g) It shall report regularly to the Association at the annual meeting.
(h) It shall appoint Standing Committees in accordance with the By-laws.
(i)The members may. set aside any action of the Council by a three-fourths vote at any meeting of the Association or by a majority vote by mail in which one-fourth of the voting members of the Association have voted. Such vote by mail shall be held upon petition of fifty members of the Association.
Sec. 4. Terms of Office.
(a) Councillors chosen by the membership at large shall serve for a term of three years except as stated in the By-laws.
(b) No person shall serve on the Council for two consecutive terms.
(c) The Council year shall be the Fiscal Year.

Article VI. Committees
Sec. 1. Committees shall be appointed in accordance with the By-laws.
Sec. 2. All members of the Association are eligible for committee membership.
Sec. 3. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Committees of the Association.
Sec. 4. Each Committee shall present an annual report to the Council.

Article VII. Sections
Sec. 1. Special interest sections of the Association may be constituted as provided for in the By-laws.

Article VIII. Meetings
Sec. 1. Meetings shall be held as provided for in the By-laws.

Article IX. By-laws
Sec. 1. By-laws and amendments to them may be proposed in writing by the Executive Board, by the Council, or by twenty voting members of the Association.
Sec. 2. They shall be received by the Executive Secretary and included in the agenda for the annual general meeting.
Sec. 3. They may be adopted by a majority vote of the members present and voting at an annual general meeting.
Sec. 4. Any By-law may be suspended by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting at an annual general meeting.

Article X. Amendments to the Constitution
Sec. 1. Amendments to the constitution may be proposed in writing by the Council, by the Executive Board, or by twenty voting members of the

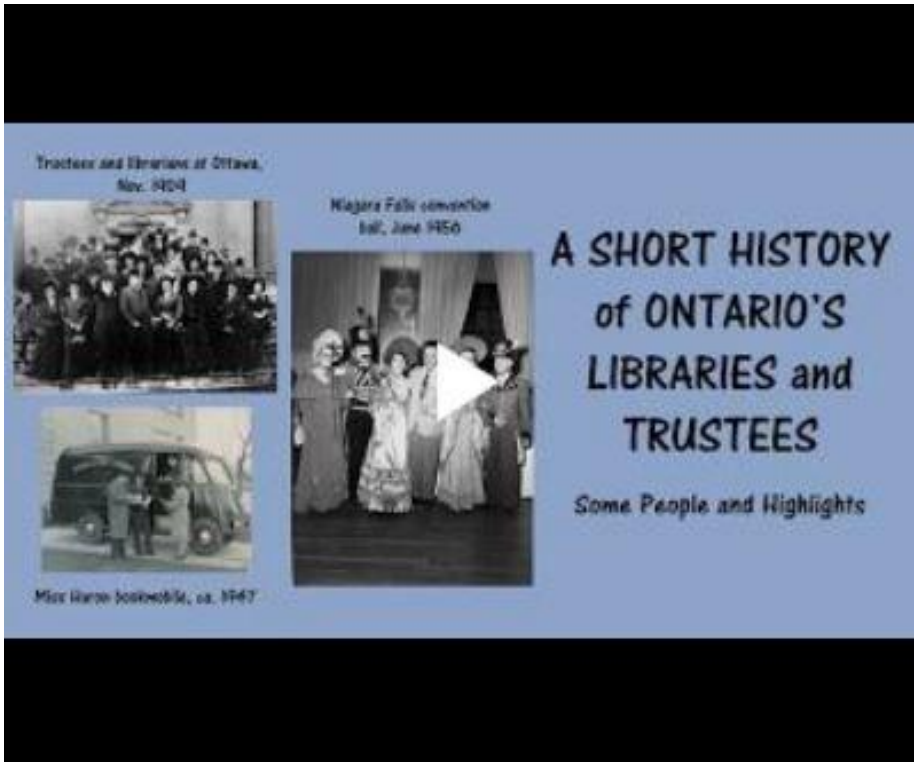
Association for consideration by a Constitution Committee at least two months before the annual general meeting.
Sec. 2. Report of the Constitution Committee shall be received by the Executive Secretary, included in the agenda for the annual general meeting, and mailed to the membership three weeks in advance of the meeting.
Sec. 3. Amendments may be adopted by a majority vote of the members present and voting at the annual general meeting.

The founding meeting of the Canadian Library Association at McMaster University, Hamilton, in June 1946 is the subject of my blog at this link.

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Short History of Ontario Library Boards and Trustees

I had an opportunity to speak at OLA's most recent Super Conference in Toronto. It was the twenty-fifth anniversary! OLA's restructuring of its various annual meetings and sub-conferences in the mid-1990s has been highly successful for the library community and its trade show, attracting attention from across Canada, not just the province of Ontario.



Anyway, I was speaking at a session designed on "governance" mostly aimed at library trustees but also of some interest to librarians and people interested in libraries as well. I am posting a PDF version of a PowerPoint that I used to talk about a "short history" of Ontario's public library movement, its trustees,

legislation, the OLA itself, and some main trends that have absorbed people's attention over the past century. The history of libraries in Ontario does not usually focus on library boards or trusteeship or the OLA's impact but it is well worth examining. There have been many outstanding trustees, such as Betty Butterill (at left) from the Nepean area in Ottawa, who furthered the cause of public libraries in their communities.

You can review the session using your browser by clicking this link and reading through the PDF handout I used at the OLA Super Conference site for "The History of Public Libraries and Library Boards in Ontario."

My co-presenter was Kerry Badgley, the Past-President of OLA and its President in 2018. Kerry spoke on his current research in these areas, especially the period after the First World War.

Saturday, January 26, 2019

Ontario Library Association Constitution, 1901

Early in the twentieth century a small group of trustees, librarians, and persons interested in libraries met in Toronto at the Ontario Education Department's Normal School located on St. James Square (present-day Ryerson University). They planned to form an association to promote public library development in Ontario, despite their small numbers--just more than thirty attendees.

The delegates elected James Bain, Jr., chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library as President of the Ontario Library Association. He read an inspiring paper, "The Library Movement in Ontario." The new Secretary from Lindsay, Edwin A. Hardy, gave a more pragmatic paper, "An Outline Programme of the Work of the Ontario Library Association." Both men would be instrumental in the following years in which the OLA would vigorously promote public libraries and become one of the most successful library associations in North America. Other presentations focused on Canadian literature and poetry, small libraries and schools, travelling libraries, and book selection. By all newspaper accounts, the meeting boded well for the future of libraries in the province.

A draft constitution had been prepared by a small committee beforehand and was adopted with a couple of amendments as follows:

CONSTITUTION OF THE ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ADOPTED, APRIL 8, 1901

ART. 1. NAME.
This organization shall be called "The Ontario Library Association."

ART. 2. OBJECT.
Its object shall be to promote the welfare of Libraries, by stimulating public interests in founding and improving them, by securing any need of legislation, by furthering such co-operative work as shall improve results or reduce expenses, by exchanging views and making recommendations in convention or otherwise, and by advancing the common interests of Librarians, Trustees and Directors and others engaged in library and allied in education work.

ART. 3. MEMBERS.
(a) Any person engaged in Library work as Trustee, Director, Librarian, or in any other capacity, may become a member by paying the annual fee and any others after election by the Executive Committee.
(b) Librarians may join the Association in the same way as individuals, and shall

be entitled to two representatives at the meetings of the Association.
(c) The annual fee shall be $1.00 for individuals, and $2.00 for Libraries.
(d) Honorary Members may be elected by Executive Committee at any meeting of the Committee.
(e) Any person may become a life member entitled during life to all rights and privileges of membership without payment of annual dues, by payment of $10.00.

ART. 4. OFFICERS.
(a) The officers of the Association shall be a President, two Vice-presidents, Secy.-Treasurer and five Councillors, to be elected by ballot at the adjournment of the meeting at which their Successors are elected.
(b) The officers, together with the President of the preceding year, shall constitute an Executive Committee of the Association, with power to act for the Association between meetings. Three members shall constitute a quorum.
(c) The Executive Committee shall appoint standing committees, and such other officers and committees as may be required to transact the business of the Association. (d) The Secretary and the Treasurer shall perform the duties usually assigned to such officers. The Treasurer shall expend not more than $5.00 in any month except on orders signed by the President of the Association.

ART. 5. MEETINGS.
(a) There shall be an annual meeting of the Association at such time and place as may be decided upon by the Executive Committee, and the Secretary shall send notice to every member of the Association, at least one month before the meeting.
(b) Special meetings may be called by the President, or in his absence by the Vice-President, on a written request of ten or more members, provided one month's notice be duly given, and that only business specified in the call be transacted.
(c) Ten members shall constitute a quorum.
(d) Any resolution approved in writing by every member of the Committee shall have the force of a vote.

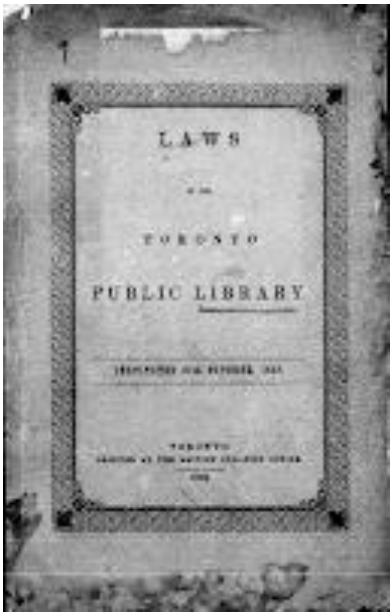
ART. 6. AMENDMENTS. Amendments may be made to the constitution at any meeting of the Association, provided that notice of the proposed amendments was sent by the Secretary to each member one month before the meeting, and that the amendment has a two-thirds majority of the members present.

The OLA's constitution would be revised a number of times over the next one hundred years as the organization and its aims expanded, but its essential thrust to promote library development would remain a constant.

Monday, January 21, 2019

Toronto Public Library, 1842

The Institution shall be called The Toronto Public Library—and the date of its commencement is hereby declared to be the 27th of October, 1842.



So read a small pamphlet that outlined the bylaws and the constitution of yet another Canadian subscription library formed in the first part of the nineteenth century. The entry fee for a subscriber was £1, the quarterly subscription 2 shillings/6 pence, and payment to the Librarian 1 shilling. Like many of the more than fifty subscription libraries established in the Canadian colonies before 1850, the library did not enjoy a long lifespan. Until now, its formation has not attracted much attention, but a perusal through the pages of the *British Colonist* for the last months of 1842 provides insight into the slow development of the 'public library' concept in Upper Canada (called Canada West from 1841-66 and Ontario after 1867) early in the 1840s.

My interest in this particular library is its name--Toronto Public Library--and the rationale for its creation at a time when mechanics' institutes, newsrooms, and societies with libraries were becoming quite popular in Canadian colonial settings. The founders identified the "public library" as one that held a general collection and reference materials and was accessible to all residents of a community on a subscription basis. But it was not a constituent part of local government because it relied on voluntary payments and contributions from philanthropic persons--usually men--who were willing to pay a sum on entry and the annual membership fee.

This type of library, often called a subscription or membership or social library, performed a public function but was not a state agent. Consequently, it was managed privately by a Committee of Management (COM) chosen by the subscribers. Yet it was clearly regarded as a community-based agency. It characterized the importance of nineteenth-century ideas about voluntarism, civic

promotion, and public-private partnerships working in the interest of the public good. Generally, before 1850 a public library was one that a group of people shared a common interest in reading.

The proposed library took shape in the autumn of 1842 when a number of gentlemen held meetings to determine if a new library venture was possible. They enlisted the support of Toronto's mayor, Henry Sherwood, a civic-minded Tory interested in the town's progress: he agreed to the President. William B. Jarvis, also a Tory and well known for his connections with the older governing clique, the Family Compact, became a manager. Another prominent member, Thomas G. Ridout, was one of the leading managers. Ridout, a Reformer in political affairs, was interested in civic projects and later became involved with the incorporation of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute in 1847 while serving as its President, 1845-48. Another reform-minded lawyer, Joseph C. Morrison, who later became a prominent judge, agreed to be secretary for the library. John Cameron, Cashier of the Commercial Bank of the Midland District at Toronto, was Vice-President.

The *British Colonist* represented centrist conservative standpoints and was not given to extravagant views. In a November 2, 1842 editorial, the paper stated its firm belief in the project for a new library because "It is fitted to be productive of great good, for many from the want of a well selected library ... have not the means of storing their minds with substantial and useful knowledge." The *Colonist* suggested young men in stores and offices would benefit most. The utilitarian philosophy underlying the editorial was common in this period and would continue to be a salient reason for supporting libraries. Later in the month, on the 23rd, the *Colonist* was even more appreciative:

...now, the position which the Colony occupies, and this City in particular, increasing in numbers and wealth, demands that an effort should be made to organize, and render effective, such an important institution as a Public Library.

...but when we consider that in a population of seventeen thousand, there is no Library belonging to the Public, this fact does not speak much in our favour. For our character therefore as citizens, and our growing intelligence as individuals, it is expected that the scheme will meet with public favour and support. Another generation is rising amongst us, and every well-wisher of his family, and of his kind, should be desirous that full opportunities should be granted to them for improvement.

Accommodation for the library was arranged in Osborne's Building at the corner of King and Church in downtown Toronto. It appears two merchants, Osborne

and Wyllie, made provision for this (the upper level of this building was later occupied for some time by the reading room of an otherwise unknown "Mercantile Library Association" recorded by W.H. Smith's *Canada, Past Present and Future* in 1851). But the efforts of its founders went for naught: apparently insufficient subscriptions were attained and eventually part of the money raised may have been turned over by the former Vice-President, John Cameron, to the newly formed Toronto Athenaeum in 1845. One of the purposes of the Toronto Athenaeum, which existed until 1855, was to establish a public popular library and museum. However, Toronto would not have a truly "public library" for another forty years. The Toronto Mechanics' Institute would serve the purpose of a general library for the public at small expense until 1883. The concept of a public library in the 1840s Canada was one that people could use if they made voluntary personal payments for membership at the time of entry and annual subscriptions. Public ownership through enabling provincial legislation, municipal ownership, and free access via residential rights lay in the future.

Nonetheless, the constitution devised by the more well-to-do Toronto "library community" at this time is interesting. The collection was to be of "general and permanent interest," suggesting a weighting toward non-fiction. New members required the recommendation of two subscribers. Women were admissible but could only vote by proxy at general meetings. Subscribers could transfer their shares according to entry money upon approval of the COM. The managers selected books based on member's suggestions and posted lists of potential purchases before acquisitions were requested. The President had a limited prerogative to purchase books of a political, local, literary, or religious nature. Penalties for overdue or damaged books were a source of revenue. Lending books to family members was a finable offense and subscribes could be fined for non-attendance at meetings. Library members were required to be conscientious and responsible and in early Victorian Toronto, one of the burdens of being a shareholder! The full text of the laws and bylaws of the proposed library are available online:

Laws of the Toronto Public Library. Toronto: British Colonist, 1842. [CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series = no. 55494]

Wednesday, August 22, 2018

Ontario Public Libraries the Internet, and the Digital Library

After 1980 library mechanization in Ontario's public libraries gave way to more rapid changes in terms of automation, i.e., the systematic control of repetitive library operations by electronic equipment and programs that reduced the need for human involvement. Computers and management information software began to make possible the term “knowledge workers.” Public libraries started using computers to circulate books, track patron overdues, and provide instant information on the status of books. North York offered the *New York Times* in on-line format. By November 1977 the complete text of Toronto’s *Globe and Mail* was being published online, “Info Globe,” which also became immediately available for online searching and retrieval for library subscribers. For some time, the University of Toronto Library Automated System (UTLAS) provided libraries across Canada a computerized system with catalogue copy for books and a database of holdings that could be used for resource sharing and conversion to computer output microfilm catalogues. It was an exciting time for users and a complex one for administrators and trustees.

With the advent of automated systems, the potential of networking for cooperative projects was broadened. Over the course of two years, the Ontario government funded two important technological related library conferences. The first, a futures symposium, *Libraries 2000*, was held at Toronto in 1985. Speakers ranged across a wide territory to explore the society, economy, and technology that Canadians would likely experience in the years ahead. Frank Feather, who often elaborated the theme “Thinking Globally, Acting Locally,” spoke to the issue of the need to transition to an electronic environment. The American futurist, Marvin Cetron, predicted that information would become more expensive and possibly the preserve of large corporations charging fees. However, he was optimistic about the public library’s future.

Two years later, in 1987, the Province planned another conference at Toronto: *The Electronic Library*, a deliberation on “second-generation” products for library automation. The era for upgrading or purchasing more sophisticated, expensive, integrated successors to “first-generation” equipment had arrived. Conference topics were quite technical: online catalogs, information searching, public access, and the right to information were more nuanced library issues beyond the public library sector itself. One speaker talked about the intelligent catalog of the future, one that could perform a search and offer a suggestion for

the searcher to consider, “Give me more like this!”

The success of *Libraries 2000* and *The Electronic Library* served to highlight the concepts of “paperless systems” or “information age.” A major theme was the need for an effective system to organize information on a community basis with a view to free electronic retrieval and distribution. “Information” was becoming an ubiquitous term used interchangeably with concepts long associated with print culture, i.e., knowledge and ideas. Advocates insisted that it could empower people by supplying resources for better decision making. Pessimists believed that the global economic structure that information supported could ultimately displace individuals and communities with authoritarian structures. The capacity to strengthen both administrative centralization and decentralized production of content seemed to be taking place. New groups and audiences were in the process of creation, e.g., electronic mail groups or the MTV generation.

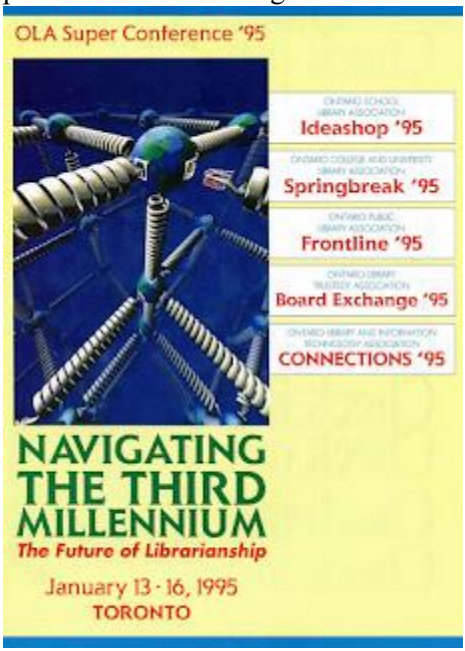
The Impact of the Internet in the 1990s

Towards the end of the 1980s, librarians and trustees from local municipal libraries and the Ontario Library Association (OLA) began to think in terms of devising a strategic plan for all Ontario. It was now possible to think realistically about the creation of a provincial database—an inventory of public library holdings for access and use at the local level which could be used directly by patrons with minimal assistance from staff. Thus, the concept of *One Place to Look*, published in 1990 by the Ontario Strategic Directions Council shortly before the Internet’s rapid development, talked about regional library clusters becoming part of a larger “information grid.”

When the word-wide “network of networks,” the Information Highway, began to come into prominence in the early 1990s, it revolutionized global high-speed communications systems. The Internet included computer networks, electronic mail and data files, fiber-optic cable television systems, the World Wide Web, Gopher searching, newsgroups, bulletin board systems, relay chat, and many interactive features. *One Place to Look* was visionary, but perhaps arrived too early to be a catalyst for planning because the technical infrastructure funding for collaborative projects actually was a federal responsibility.

A few years later, the federal government established its Community Access Program (CAP) for rural Canadians, "Connecting Canadians," beginning in 1994. One of the aims was to eliminate a "digital divide" in Canada by permitting rural electronic access to government services and online learning resources. Typically, during this transition, a public library would first connect to the Internet through program-sponsored computers and eventually launch its own web site. Later, in 1999, the Ontario government provided money for ten digital library projects worth $250,000 from its Library Strategic Development Fund. Toronto Public Library's "Virtual Reference Library" commenced in October 1999; it offered packaged Internet resources, such as "Science Net" for students, and e-mail service for requests beyond the Metro Toronto area.

The Internet's impact on public libraries was far-reaching after the mid-1990s and newer technologies, such as the wireless smartphone, would continue to revolutionize that way information was distributed and formatted. The Ontario Strategic Directions Council, in its *Building Value Together*, published in 2002, advocated formation of a single agency, the "Ontario Public Library," as the primary agency to lead public libraries into the future. This Library could provide province-wide licensing of electronic resources, conduct market research, plan consortia purchases, develop partnerships, and provide effective central leadership to harness the collective capacity of the public library community. Again, the concept was tied to technological ability and to increased use of digitally produced data.



Digital Libraries Emerge

From the perspective of the user, the Twenty-first century "Digital Library" is a place where resources are available without recourse to visiting a library, service is 24 by 7, staff members could offer assistance in a virtual environment, and their personal library accounts are accessible electronically. As the concept of "Library 2.0" evolved, it became evident that ideas about user-centered change, community participation, and adoption of new technologies would be the keys to future development. In 2005, the provincial government provided funding to implement a new province-wide framework, "Knowledge Ontario." With funding of $8

million, Knowledge Ontario expanded to include “Our Ontario,” “Resource Ontario,” “Ask Ontario” and “Connect Ontario” projects. Now it was possible for public libraries to ally with schools, archives, museums, and post-secondary institutions in a virtual setting. Technical infrastructure and broadband access were important to achieving the long-term goal of equity of access via a full range of technology. Futurists conceiving ideas about “Library 3.0” or the “Third Generation Library” viewed libraries as adaptive services and flexible structures designed with a community’s involvement and delivered with the participation of library staff and community members. When Knowledge Ontario ceased operation in 2012, OurDigitalWorld carried on the work of open access to digitized historical materials.

It seems the Digital Library will continue to rely on technological developments and collaborative efforts. The integration of public libraries with other public sector heritage and information institutions—public, school, government, post-secondary, and special libraries as well as archives and museums—in formal linkages would ultimately benefit a wide-ranging clientele wishing to invest in an information rich universe. Of course, the Digital Library presents problems of its own: storage, preservation, and copyright are just a few of the challenges. However, the potential for users to access vast ranges of information in many formats is a goal that the library has embraced because it is an institution that can help people find information and how to evaluate it.

An earlier blog post on the Information Highway given in 1995.

My more detailed article on the development of electronic public libraries in Ontario from 1960–2010 is at this link.

My post on the 1990 plan ***One Place to Look; The Ontario Public Library Strategic Plan*** is at this link.

Thursday, August 16, 2018

Regional Library Systems in Ontario, 1965–1985

French language display in Algonquin Region, 1969. Ray Smith, Algonquin director, with Irma McDonough, Provincial Library Service.

The new 1966 *Public Libraries Act* formed the structure for rapid, and conflicting, developments into the mid-1980s when this act was greatly modified. This was an era of continuous change in local government at a period of time when municipal regional government replaced older county structures. Expanded provincial jurisdiction over municipalities in Ontario became common. As well, federal/provincial centennial financing--$38.7 million net cost in Ontario--became available to assist the largest construction program since the Carnegie grant era. Almost seventy public library buildings were renovated or constructed in Ontario on a cost-shared basis with municipalities

The 1966 Act modernized local board structures and funding. As well, the Act introduced quasi-independent regional library systems governed by trustees in an effort to equalize services and coordinate planning across cities, towns, older counties and districts in Ontario.

The Changing Landscape from the Sixties to the Seventies

The entire philosophy and administrative apparatus of library service were in flux. *Living and Learning*, a 1968 report, proposed integrating school and public libraries: it was received coolly in the public library sector. In 1972, the Provincial Library Service (PLS) in Toronto was transferred from the

Department of Education to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, partly to reinforce efforts in the field of continuing education. Provincial library board grants were doubled and a report, *The Learning Society*, followed. However, within two years libraries were shifted to a new Ministry of Culture. These administrative changes were made without extensive studies or preparations and reinforced a sense of drift towards recreational library services.

Throughout this turbulent period, the size of the PLS remained mostly unchanged and it continued to publish communication pieces in the *Ontario Library Review* and also added *In Review; Canadian Books for Young People* in summer 1967. *In Review* was edited by Irma (McDonough) Milnes, who later helped create the Canadian Children's Book Centre in 1976. To signal a new beginning, provincial travelling libraries were phased out and certification for librarians ended in 1972. Gradually, the PLS mandate was shifted to coordination through fourteen regional systems rather than inspection and supervision. Although the new regional systems did not normally directly serve Ontarians (except Metro Toronto and the northern regions that provided books and services) provincial aid to these bodies increased from $67,000 in 1959 to $8,384,000 in 1981. By 1980, 99% of Ontarians had direct access to municipal tax-supported public library service.

Year	Population 000s	Population Served 000s	Circulation 000s	Volumes 000s
1965	6,788	5,303	44,736	10,060
1970	7,551	6,667	50,277	12,495
1975	8,172	7,937	53,128	17,645
1980	8,754	8,524	56,917	23,291

Table I: Public library expansion, 1965-80 (Sources: *Ontario Library Review*, *Public Library Statistics*, and Report of the Minister of Education)

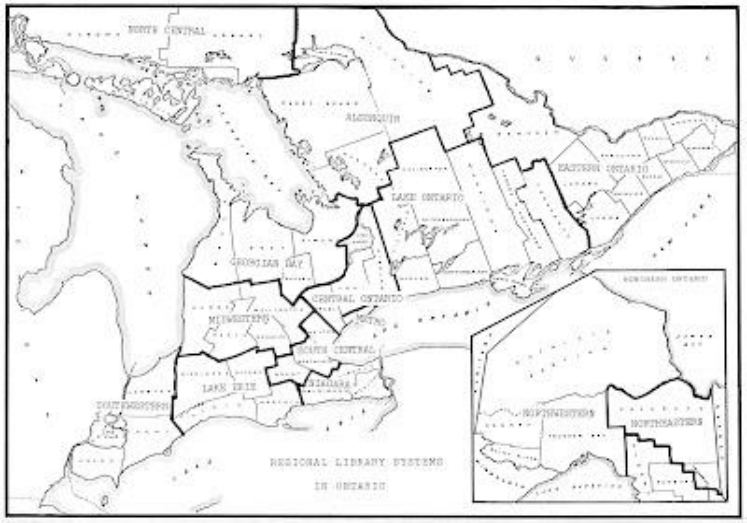
After 1970, total expenditures (both municipal and provincial) rose rapidly as well, although inflation accounted for more a major portion of this increase in the following table II.

Year	Library Boards	Population	Expenditure	Per Capita
	Boards*	Served 000s	000s**	Expenses
1960	309 (201)	4,178	$ 10,442	$ 2.50
1965	311 (220)	5,303	17,888	3.37
1970	347	6,667	39,172	5.88
1975	463	7,937	80,979	10.20

1980	546	8,524	139,009	16.31

* Association libraries in brackets (abolished in 1966)
** does not include provincial library agencies, e.g. regional systems
Table II: Public library boards and expenditures, 1960-80 (Sources: *Ontario Library Review*, *Public Library Statistics*, and Report of the Minister of Education).

Regionalization of library services in the province presented opportunities to provide improved services and new ways to achieve them. But, on balance, the record of the 1970s was mixed. The 14 library regions had differing resources and financial bases to work with. They were successful in instituting better communication patterns, e.g. telex, that aided inter-library loan. Metro Toronto created a centralized metropolitan reference collection by assuming Toronto Public Library's reference collection in 1968 and eventually opening a much-heralded central reference library in 1977. Two regions, Niagara and Midwestern, developed centralized processing operations where publishers' books could be displayed, purchased, and catalogued at greater discounts but Niagara was forced to close at the end of 1979 due to debt. Three northern regions created a computer produced book catalogue of holdings for users. Across Ontario, regional film "pools" and union catalogues of audio-visual resources were created for local libraries, groups, and individuals to access programs and entertainment that proved popular.



Ontario Regional Libraries, 1966 to 1984 (click to enlarge)

But, by the mid-1970s, there were signs of discontent and the province funded the “Bowron Report” to investigate options. Unfortunately, consensus on its main recommendations could not be achieved and with the Niagara closure the provincial minister in charge of public libraries decided to embark on a thorough

multi-year study of regional systems and public library service. Eventually, in 1984 a new *Public Libraries Act* was passed to take effect for 1985. It reduced the number of regions, standardized their services, and shifted their focus to networking and technological improvements without making direct major changes to local services. Rather than quasi-independent boards operating regions, the province introduced eight Ontario Library Service areas and retained control and funding for these.

The long-term review and introduction of a new Act came at a time--the late 1970s and early 1980s--when automation and telecommunications were beginning to transform the way library service was delivered to the public and the way in which books and periodicals were published. The *Random House Electronic Thesaurus* first appeared in 1981 and already, from 1977 on, the full-text of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* was available in database form when it became the first newspaper to publish electronically and in print on the same day. In libraries, computerized output was becoming a viable alternative to the traditional card catalogue. Indeed, the PLS was actively investigating computer applications and networking in Ontario through an office established at the Metro Toronto Library by the regional systems.

The potential of computer-based information technologies on library resources and library administrative functions (especially circulation, cataloguing, and communication) were studied extensively for the subsequent half-decade. This activity signaled the end of librarians' and trustees' preoccupation with administrative units of service and the need to extend services to unserved populations. Instead, they were obliged to reconsider the status of non-print collections as "secondary" in budgeting and planning and to prepare for an automated future. In 1980 it was quite possible to speculate on "electronic libraries," as Henry Campbell, Toronto's chief librarian (1956-78) did, but, by 1985, when the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture sponsored a provincial symposium, "Libraries 2000," new technological possibilities were becoming practical realities. The dominance of print culture, which Marshall McLuhan had challenged in the 1960s, was in decline and electronic modes of communication on the rise. Regional telex equipment had forged links in the 1970s, but now fax and electronic networks connected by computer workstations in offices and homes were transforming ideas about the delivery of library services. Libraries could not escape this trend: both the *Ontario Library Review* and *In Review* ceased publication in 1982.

Between 1965 and 1985 there were many changes in public administration, technology, demographics, economic development, and social conventions, but the idea of improving modern library service and distribution reading and

literature to the reading public, developing bibliographic systems and information, and making librarians important elements in linking citizens with information, remained constant in Ontario's "public library community." Progressive changes in the model of service to communities, advances in technology, the growth of the liberal "welfare state" in the public services sector, multiculturalism, and bilingualism, had provided the framework for library promoters to innovate and adapt in Ontario. Across Canada, new directions were clear by the third quarter of the twentieth century: as libraries united in cooperative efforts to share resources and to apply automation in daily operations the old relationship with printed resources were in decline and the electronic future raised many new challenges that required further study and action.

My blog on the Bowron Report, 1976.

My blog on the Ontario Public Library Programme Review (1982) that formed the basis for the new public libraries act enacted in 1985.

Saturday, August 04, 2018

The Modern Public Library Emerges in Ontario, 1920–1965: Brief Synopsis

The idea of the modern public library as an energetic influence promoting its services to the entire community arrived in Ontario after most Carnegie buildings were in place. Of course, the service ethic had existed before 1920, but the value of stewardship--the library as guardian or storehouse of treasures--had loomed larger for decades. As the service value progressed into the 1950s, the public library served as a place for collecting the best books and for making them useful to as many children and adults as possible. The library became a more accessible community resource and an active force: books were conveniently arranged on "open" shelves, and the librarian became a guide or intermediary to assist patrons. The modern library was an appealing idea (one not wholly accepted in some of Ontario's hundreds of municipalities) that successfully prevailed despite the austerities of the Great Depression and the Second World War.

The Interwar Years, 1918–40

Following the First World War, Ontario's tax-supported public libraries were at the forefront of a growing national movement to supply reading materials in local communities. In a nation-wide survey by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for 1920-21, almost 90% of free public libraries were located in Ontario (186 of 210) and respectively held 75% of the total volumes, provided 67% of the total circulation, and spent about 68% of Canada's current total. At this time, just over 50% of Ontario's 2.9 million population was served by free libraries. Of course, many librarians were not satisfied with the status quo: members of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the office of the provincial Inspector of Public Libraries were formulating ideas to improve library service along "modern" lines. A new publication, *Ontario Library Review*, founded in 1916 by the Department of Education, gave voice to these ideas.

The new *Public Libraries of Act of 1920* created a stable framework for Ontario library development for more than four decades. The Inspector of Public Libraries from 1916-29, William O. Carson, favoured per capita funding for libraries based on local community size, improved support from the provincial agency in the Department of Education, and better training for libraries to improve administration, services, and book selection. Carson, an influential leader in the library community, often stated that trained personnel and improved book stocks were the keys to library development, and he pursued this course

until his untimely death in 1929. In 1920, his department published an important treatise on reference work and information sources to be used in public services. For smaller communities, the Inspector's office provided basic training courses in librarianship in the Ontario Library School in Toronto from 1916-27. This school evolved on the University of Toronto campus and provided hundreds of students with a bachelor's degree that became the necessary entry into librarianship. Carson also was actively involved in promoting library services in adult education and developing Ontario's travelling library service for rural and northern areas. As a result of his leadership, there was a surge in library output during the boom years of the 1920s.

Year	Prov Grant	Expenses	Book Expenses	Vols	Circulation
1920	$ 27,686	$ 738,010	$ 120,131	1,537,517	6,316,340
1930	$ 39,079	$1,239,798	$ 243,145	2,142,445	11,433,208
Gain	41.2%	68%	102.4%	44%	81%

Table I: Public library growth 1920-30 (Source: Ontario Report of the Minister of Education)

At the local level, the principal city libraries--Windsor, London, Hamilton, and Ottawa--were prepared to emulate the work of Toronto Public Library. Toronto opened the Boys and Girls House in 1922, the first children's library building in the British Empire. During the same period, there was a conscious effort by public librarians to support efforts on the literary front as well. Librarians, such as George Locke, promoted library ideas and supported reading and writing by publishing in the *Canadian Bookman* and inviting authors to contribute to the *Ontario Library Review* and by supporting activities for the newly formed Canadian Book Week organized by the Canadian Authors Association from 1921-57. However, both the OLA and the CAA were small organizations, and local efforts were often sporadic. Dr. Locke, of course, published *When Canada was New France* in 1919, a work that became a provincial school text. Other librarians, such as B. Mabel Dunham and Fred Dela Fosse, published historical novels.

With the death of William Carson in 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, library expansion in Ontario halted. Between 1929/30 and 1934/35, free public libraries reduced their expenditures from $1.25 million to $ 1.01 before the totals trended up to $1.28 million in 1939/40. In the Depression era, survival, even in the largest libraries, was the mark of success.

In Toronto, book circulation increased to 4.5 million while finances eroded: there was an emphasis on nonfiction and technical works as the jobless read books on careers and employment. In rural areas, Ontario communities began to experiment with co-operative library systems based on county jurisdictions despite the absence of enabling legislation. It was the first recognition that the traditional Ontario model library serving one community (however small and impoverished) was not adequate for its users.

Only a few new buildings appeared, Ottawa's branch (Rideau) and Kenilworth branch in Hamilton being a notable exception. Throughout these difficult years, Ontario libraries continued to actively promote reading.
At Windsor, a community that briefly went into bankruptcy and amalgamated with neighbouring municipalities, the chief librarian, Anne Hume, continued to emphasize linkages with adult education. Yet, she had to suspend issuing the *Canadian Periodical Index* in 1933 five years after its inception by her library; this ground-breaking endeavour resumed in 1938 centred at the University of Toronto. Toronto's new chief librarian, Charles R. Sanderson, promoted collections via radio, and TPL's Marie Tremaine began publishing works on Canadian bibliography and printing.

The landmark national 1933 report on Canadian libraries headed by John Ridington, George Locke, and Mary Black, *Libraries in Canada*, applauded the development of bilingual collections at Ottawa and collections in German at Kitchener. As well, Ontario librarians became more conscious of the need to plan systematically and create provincial or national schemes for services that the Ridington report had recommended. The OLA organized joint conferences with Quebec and Maritime librarians at Ottawa in 1937 and then Montreal in 1939, where the Canadian Children's Library Association was formed to promote reading on a national scale. In 1938, the OLA presented a *Brief to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations* advocating better coordination across Canada and the foundation of a national library at Ottawa.

The War Years, 1940–45

With the onset of WWII, public libraries turned attention to providing reading materials for the armed forces and to supporting efforts on the home front. The new Inspector of libraries, Angus Mowat, entered the service and encouraged book camp libraries. Upon his return, he turned his attention to postwar planning and revision of the provincial library act.

The war years were lean ones, the major highlight being the opening of the new London Public Library, with its modern architectural style and open design, in 1941. Literary efforts, such as the celebration of 500 years of printing, continued,

but the war effort limited activities. Charles Sanderson worked with other Canadian librarians to form the Canadian Library Council, and develop a national approach to library issues.

As the war drew to a close, Mowat and other leaders planned a post-war revival. Mowat published a popular pamphlet outlining the need for libraries, the OLA lobbied the province for better legislation and expanded provincial library service. Efforts to create a national library association finally came to fruition after the first conference of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) met at Hamilton in summer 1946 with Freda Waldon (Hamilton Public Library) elected as its first president.

Postwar Progress, 1945–65

In the immediate postwar period, plans for library service revolved around larger administrative units, especially co-operative county libraries. These county operations had developed in southwestern Ontario to provide bookmobile services rural populations and to school children. Also, there were efforts to establish a Provincial Library at Toronto; improved legislation to provide for certification of librarians; and better financing.

As political circumstances evolved, the concept of a Provincial Library proved unworkable, in part because a parallel effort to lobby the federal government to establish a National Library at Ottawa succeeded in 1953. Consequently, the OLA and Ontario's libraries turned to regional and county systems to service large parts of the province and to develop professional activities and plans at the national level in CLA.

Provincial expansion in the post-war period began slowly but accelerated at the end of the 1950s.

Year	Population 000s	Pop. Served 000s	Circulation 000s	Volumes 000s
1945	4,000	2,561	13,253	3,830
1950	4,471	2,919	15,802	4,442
1955	5,266	3,597	19,310	5,516
1960	6,111	4,178	31,962	7,438
1965	6,788	5,303	44,736	10,060

Table II: Post-war public library activity, 1945-65 (Source: Ontario Library Review and Ontario Ministry of Treasury, Economics, and Intergovernmental Affairs, *Ontario Statistics*)

As Ontario's population increased and became more diverse through post-war immigration, libraries kept pace with growth and expanded their range of services. Larger libraries were beginning to use revenue, formerly reserved for books and periods, to finance film and audio services. Print collections expanded as well, and librarians continued to contribute to book fairs, weeks, and publications: Josephine Phelan, who worked at Toronto Public Library, won a Governor General's prize in 1951 for *The Ardent Exile*, a study on Thomas D'Arcy McGee and Lillian Smith published *The Unreluctant Years* in 1953, a critical work on children's literature that remains useful today. The Edgar Osborne collection of early children's books was established in Toronto after 1949. Young Canada Book Week, launched in 1949, was marked each year with readings and story times.

With the increased output in book publishing, particularly realistic fiction, it was not unnatural that public libraries began to face more scrutiny as guardians of public morality. Censorship issues remained mostly in the background because "controversial books" were often kept separate and had to be requested. But after the popular 1959 bestseller, *Lolita*, was missed on many library shelves, censorship issues irrupted in public. Faced with changing literary standards (even the Ontario Legislature was examining complaints about books) and criticisms of traditional book selection from Robert Fulford and Pierre Berton in the *Toronto Star*, librarians and trustees began to accept that social values of behaviour and language required formal policy statements that logically framed basic selection issues in terms of their collections.

Nonetheless, it would take some time, most of the 1960s, before more controversial reading material, such as *Playboy*, would reach library magazine racks. In one area, non-English language collections, there was some progress. Toronto, of course, had well-established "foreign" collections in about 60 languages, but many smaller libraries found difficulty financing these collections and procuring suppliers. For its part, the provincial government long-delayed commissioning a study devoted to examining non-English collections until 1980.

As the decade of the 1950s closed, it was apparent that a Provincial Library would not be formed, and further planning would be necessary. A report by W. Stewart Wallace on provincial options appeared in 1957; it recommended a modest strengthening the role of the Public Libraries Branch headed by Angus Mowat. In the same year, county library legislation replacing library co-operatives was introduced, followed by regional co-operative legislation in 1959. A revamped Provincial Library Service was charged to promote these schemes. In Toronto, where a metropolitan government had been enacted in 1953, the 1960

report by the American academic, Ralph Shaw, suggested library amalgamation and centralized services.

Five years later, a comprehensive (but controversial) provincial "St. John Report" by an American consulting firm preceded systematic changes in the *Public Libraries Act* in 1966. It was a thorough review that swept away the long-standing model law that had existed since 1920, notably the existence of Association Library boards that were not eligible to receive municipal tax revenue or the per capita municipal support clauses mandated for free libraries. The new 1966 *Public Libraries Act* formed the structure for rapid, and conflicting, developments into the mid-1980s. A long era of distinctive public library development was at an end in Ontario as trustees and librarians began to grapple with regional systems and municipal reorganizations.

A few online biographies for further reading.

Mary J.L. Black, Fort William Public Library, 1909-37

William O. Carson, Inspector of Public Libraries, 1916-29

B. Mabel Dunham, Kitchener Public Library, 1908-44

George H. Locke, Toronto Public Library, 1908-37

Angus Mowat, Director of Public Libraries Branch, 1937-60

Charles Sanderson, Toronto Public Library, 1937-56

Lillian Helena Smith, Toronto Public Library 1912-52

My blog on the report by W. Stewart Wallace on Ontario public libraries in 1957.

My blog on the Metropolitan Toronto library study by Ralph Shaw in 1960.

My blog on the St. John report on Ontario public libraries in 1965.

My blog on the development of regional library systems from 1966 to 1985 is at this link.

Sunday, March 11, 2018

Canadian Colonial Subscription Libraries, 1775-1850

Ennotville Library, c.1901 (built 1856)

From 1775 to 1850, small membership subscription libraries acted as public libraries dispensing educational resources and recreational reading to Canadian users on a geographic-community or common-interest reading basis. The variety, number, and collective status of subscription libraries ushered in the persistent nineteenth-century concept of the semi-private public library administered by trustees and populated by members who voluntarily agreed to accept entry charges, annual dues, and fundraising. The collegial space provided by the subscription library fostered a greater sense of publicness in an emerging Canadian nation before 1850. It also forged numerous associative identities in localities for like-minded reading groups. Subscription library development reveals that significant attributes of post-1850 municipal public libraries--especially the public library association which continues today--were inherited from Canada's colonial library era.

Early Subscription Libraries

Beginning at Quebec City (1779) and Montreal (1796) and spreading to other colonies and the Canadian west, a variety of subscription libraries were established ranging from the exclusive share-holding archetype (e.g., at Halifax) to the more inclusive, general interest library supported by modest entry charges and annual fees in small towns and cites. Over time, these libraries developed on an irregular, parochial basis in differing colonial environments, although common public features are evident, such as claims for societal betterment. It was not unusual for a subscription library to be integrated with the work of specialized societies and associations (esp. in Quebec), or for the library to be aligned with news or reading rooms. This multifaceted public interface helped to bridge reading from the private to the public realm, to improve access to print resources, and to invest libraries with a communal significance in the Victorian period before Confederation. By the mid-point of the nineteenth century, subscription libraries occupied the middle ground between the personal realm and the state where formation of ideas on private liberality, community interests,

and governance converged.

Mechanics' Institutes and Association Libraries

In the course of seven decades, subscription type libraries evolved into "library associations" regulated by public statutes stipulating control by the members and an elected governing board. These libraries were identified less with earlier joint-stock, proprietary, or subscription business terminology and more with the appellation "public library" that was in use throughout the entire period, i.e. a library that was accessible to all residents of a community, but not generally free because it required voluntary personal payments. These small libraries performed a public function but were not state agencies. In some instances, they received token payments from different government levels, but legal sanction for state financial aid did not exist in legislative acts. In the evolution of public libraries in Canada, attempts by subscription managers to achieve a public profile by seeking financial support from colonial parliaments and by staking claims to publicness (the interests of the people as a whole) were significant steps.

At the midway point of the nineteenth century, the *Library Association and Mechanics' Institute Act of 1851* became a critical foundation for the subscription library's conversion to the Canadian "association library." In accordance with enabling legislation that would become the hallmark of twentieth-century Canadian provincial public library legislation, the 1851 law for the two Canadas (Ontario and Quebec) recognized that a public library association was to be available for persons on a voluntary membership basis. The law established that library associations would be governed by local boards of trustees independent from control by municipal politicians (a "special purpose body" later identified by political commentators and academics on local government). Further, it provided public recognition of association libraries, thereby creating the opportunity for provincial grants which supplemented local fundraising efforts. Similar legislative arrangements in other provinces, such as British Columbia, ensured that the subscription model, re-labelled as a 'public library association,' would continue to coexist with its "free library" cousin well into the twentieth century and beyond.

More information is available in my article published in *Library and Information History*, a quarterly journal publishing articles by authors on all subjects and all periods relating to the history of libraries and librarianship and to the history of information.

For access to the original article go to this link: Subscription Libraries for the Public.

Tuesday, February 06, 2018

Canadian Academic Libraries in the Postwar Period, 1945–60

The general history of college and university library development in Canada has not been examined extensively. There are few studies that synthesize the entire history of Canadian academic libraries and normally two core themes are emphasized—library growth and progressive advances in librarianship. But these two perspectives can be applied to other types of libraries and do not serve to highlight the distinctiveness of academic libraries or librarians. There are some valuable, informative accounts of Canadian libraries in higher education that are commonly regarded as 'institutional history.'

Because the library is positioned within its parent institution, librarians have understandably chronicled library support for the needs and plans of a particular university or college. Individual libraries, such as those at the Universities of Toronto and Alberta, are notable in this regard: Robert Blackburn's *Evolution of the Heart: A History of the University of Toronto Library up to 1981*; and Merill Distad's *The University of Alberta Library: The First Hundred Years, 1908–2008*. These institutional histories may be considered the foundation for more general histories that explore particular themes and developments. Added to these local studies are a multitude of other contributions as articles, pamphlets, and theses. Many works concentrate on more recent decades after the 1960s when 'growth' and 'progress' were central features.

Of course, the development of academic libraries on a national basis as well as the careers of the 'college librarian' or the 'university librarian' began before the sixties. I wrote, in 2016, about the contribution of the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) to the development of Canadian university and college libraries during the Great Depression. This was one instance of a change in philosophy of service. From 1932–35, thirty-four institutions of higher education shared in library grants totaling $214,800 in a national (Canada and Newfoundland) project conducted by a Canadian Advisory Group established by the CCNY. George H. Locke, Toronto Public Library, headed the group which awarded Carnegie financial aid for the improvement of undergraduate print collections.

The attempts by Canadian administrators to adapt library collections, organization, and staffing to local circumstances to improve interwar

undergraduate library services was an unusual step towards national thinking about the role of college and university libraries. For this post, see The Carnegie Corporation Advisory Group on Canadian College Libraries, 1930-35, posted in 2016 with an accompanying link to my article published in the journal, *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation*.

Postwar Academic Libraries in Canada

Another period, the postwar (1945–1960), is another seldom referenced period that is of interest. After the Second World War, the expansion of Canadian post-secondary sector was notable for several modernizing trends: the infusion of federal funds for academic research, the frequent erection of campus buildings, increased enrollments, the establishment of new universities, the independence of previously affiliated small colleges, and the creation of comprehensive research efforts and graduate programs. In this changing environment, the per-eminence of the humanities and undergraduate teaching gave way to scientific and technological research, business and professional orientations, and graduate studies.

Mills Memorial Library, n.d., McMaster University, opened 1951

Libraries and librarians responded to these challenges in many similar ways. There are many contemporary accounts in relation to library architecture, the acquisition and organization of collections, administrative library structures and staffing, services for faculty and students, and efforts by librarians to realize professional standing, to achieve recognition as ‘professional librarians.’ The architectural redefinition of libraries (such as the Mills Memorial Library above),

the impetus to establish research collections, the maturation of academic librarianship, and the increasing complexity of library operations were prominent features in the postwar period. The gradual evolution of academic libraries toward more uniform organizational purposes and structures on a national basis in a 'postwar era' following World War II was followed by a period of 'mid-century modernization' that included the more memorable and better documented decade of the 1960s.

The postwar history of academic libraries was deeply influenced not just by local conditions and persons but also by broader trends occurring in the nation's universities and colleges and the library community across North America. Examination of sources for the period mirror general currents in the Canadian post-secondary sector that made library provision of resources, assistance, and information more integral to the work of students and faculty. Of course, the national pace of change from 1945 to 1960 was moderate compared with the succeeding period, the dynamic 1960s that loom large in the history of Canadian libraries. The sixties ushered in many educational changes, especially the establishment of provincial systems of higher education and vastly improved funding for libraries in higher education. Nonetheless, library development in the 1960s should not be viewed simply as a break with the past but as an outgrowth of many changes already underway.

More complete information on the postwar era is in my article, "Postwar Canadian Academic Libraries, 1945–60," available at the *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship* website.

I have another post on Canadian academic libraries in the 1940s is at this link.

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Canadian Victorian Public Libraries before 1900

The common characteristics of free public libraries that were legislated in Ontario (1882), the City of Saint John (1883), and British Columbia (1891) served as a guide for public library development towards the end of the nineteenth century. In this version, the 'free public library' or 'free library' was a municipal institution governed by a board of management and funded primarily by local taxes. These libraries were accessible to all community residents who were not charged at the point of entry. Local decisions, based on provincial legislation, mostly determined the establishment and governance of libraries. Community members participated on a voluntary basis and the nature and extent of services varied from one community to another.

Types of Victorian Public Libraries

However, widespread acceptance of this 'model' developed slowly, in part because other views identified the 'public library' as one that was accessible to all residents of a community, but not generally free or a constituent part of local government because it relied on voluntary personal payments or contributions from philanthropic individuals, community groups, or persons willing to pay a membership fee. This type of library performed a public function but was not a state agent, i.e. the municipal, provincial, or federal government. Often, the establishment of libraries open free to the public was furthered by philanthropic efforts and managed privately. In some cases, these libraries received assistance and direction from government in recognition of their beneficial public function.

It is these atypical or hybrid libraries that will be discussed here in a Canadian context. They were public libraries open freely to the public without direct charge or with small personal (or family) charges. They were clearly regarded as community-based service agencies. In many ways, they characterized the importance of nineteenth-century ideas about voluntarism, civic promotion, and public-private partnerships working in the interest of the public good. They were distinctive in their own right and founded in all parts of British North America as the following few examples illustrate.

New Westminster, B.C. --- In 1865, New Westminster was the capital of the mainland colony of British Columbia. There were two initial inducements to establish an institute and public library: a collection of books offered by the disbanded Columbia Detachment of Royal Engineers and Queen Victoria's

donation of a copy of her late husband Prince Albert's speeches "to the public libraries of her more important colonies." The New Westminster Library and Reading Room opened on 15 August 1865 on Columbia Street supported by a grant from the colonial government and by membership and regular subscription rates, e.g. to borrow books a member paid $5 a year. The library operated from a building that formerly housed the colony's official Mint and was run by a board of management composed of four colonial officials and the president of the municipal council. This happy state of affairs continued for a few years until the colony's government funding was withdrawn by 1868. Subscriptions--a common method of financing 19th-century local libraries--supported library operations thereafter until 1890. At this point, the federal government offered the Mint property to the city provided a new building would be erected and opened as a free public library. The offer was accepted: the mint was demolished and a new building opened in 1892 with renewed funding from the municipality. For most this period, the library was never a 'free library' in the modern sense but exhibited a private-public partnership to support a 'public library' that was not unusual in the 19th century.

Montreal Free Library/Gésu Free Library (est. 1889) --- "Any *bona fide* resident of Montreal, irrespective of class or creed, is entitled, under certain conditions, to draw books from the Gésu Free Library." So read the introduction to an 1895 catalogue of circulating books for the Gésu Free Library opened on 4 October 1889. It was aimed at primarily English-speaking Catholic Montrealers. The library was essentially a parish library situated near the Jesuit Collège Sainte-Marie on Bleury Street. The library owed its existence to the dedicated work of a few ladies active in the Promoters of the League of the Sacred Heart who raised funds through annual afternoon teas. They desired to promote books based on Christian beliefs and morals. A small committee, ultimately responsible to the Sacred Heart Union, managed the library. By 1895, the library was circulating 15,000 books to an extended public in downtown Montreal and receiving in-kind donations and money from private citizens.

The library offered titles in English, with translations of French authors who were mostly Catholic. Notably, however, there were fiction books for youngsters, such as Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, at a time when many public libraries maintained age limits excluding children. There were also popular British novelists: Dickens, Trollope, Collins, Bulwer-Lytton, and Scott. American authors, such as Irving and Cooper, and few women authors, such as the Irish novelist Rosa Mullholland and Lady Georgiana Fullerton, were also available. The Montreal Free Library (sometimes called Sacred Heart Union Library) was not a municipal institution, of course, it was a small library without charge at the point of entry and based on the ideas of its Catholic promoters that

Fraser Institute, n.d.

good reading (including fiction). Considering the mid-19th century controversies in Montreal about liberal works and fiction in general regarding the closure of the Institut Canadien de Montréal, this was a progressive step. Books for children was another important ingredient that would eventually become an orthodox feature of public libraries.

Fraser Institute, Montreal (est. 1885) --- In his 1870 will, the businessman Hugh Fraser placed most of his possessions amounting to $200,000 in trust to John J. C. Abbott and Frederick Torrence to establish an institution--a free public library, museum, and gallery open to all Montreal's citizens regardless of class and without any fee. The Fraser Institute was incorporated by a statute in 1870 that determined its course: "to aid in the diffusion of useful knowledge by affording free access, to all desirous of it, to books and to scientific objects and subjects, and to works of art, and for that purpose to erect appropriate buildings, and to procure books, scientific objects and subjects, and works of art, making always the acquisition and maintenance of a library the leading object to be kept in view." The Institute was managed by an elite Board of Governors; however, legal battles over Fraser's will delayed progress.

Finally, a building was acquired and opened in 1885. The Institute, located at the corner of University Street and Dorchester Boulevard, initially was a reference library. A circulating collection commenced operations in 1889. Thus, after almost 20 years, the Institute was able to fulfill its original purpose outlined in the 1870 Act. Hugh Fraser's philanthropic vision involved a private institution--starting as an endowed library--operating in the public interest to further educational standards. It had a self-perpetuating incorporated private board of managers which, from time to time, made substantial contributions to its success and ensured free access.

Yarmouth Public Library, N.S. (est. 1872) -- Loran Ellis Baker, a prominent local businessman and politician, was instrumental in establishing a public library in Yarmouth in 1872. He first purchased 2,500 books and then presented a library, housed on the second floor of the Young and Baker building, to the town's citizens. The library was open for limited hours each week, but books

circulated free of charge. All the library expenses, including the salary of a custodian who also maintained the library, were assumed by Baker. From time to time, townsfolk contributed books and material objects which eventually formed the basis for a museum. For more than a quarter-century, Baker's generous civic-mindedness served local residents well and in the 1890s, the Yarmouth Council made small appropriations to the library. When L.E. Baker died in 1899, his will stipulated that the library, its books and materials, as well as $8,000 would be made available to an incorporated body with the proviso that an equal amount be raised to establish a free public library and museum within five years. The Yarmouth Public Library and Museum was incorporated in September 1904. It was a 'free library' operated by a private body--the Yarmouth Free Public Library Association--that did not charge a fee for borrowing books. Residents could, however, pay a nominal fee to become a member of the Association managing the library and museum.

Town of Portland, N.B. (est. 1882) -- After Isaac Burpee, a prominent MP representing the local riding in Parliament, provided a small collection of books for Portland, the town turned to the local branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) for assistance. The members of this branch had built a Union Hall for the promotion of temperance and social and moral reforms, a fitting home of a town library. In 1882, the Portland WCTU incorporated (45 Vic. Chap 93, Act of NB 1882). The management of the library within the Hall was vested in the hands of the WCTU. Although the town provided support for the building and its maintenance, a small fee was also charged for library use by the WCTU library committee. This situation continued for a few years until Portland was annexed by Saint John in 1888, after which this library began to receive regular grants provided residents would not be charged for borrowing books and use of the library. The activity of the WCTU was an early manifestation of the interest by women's groups in promoting and maintaining public libraries across the nation.

Pettes Memorial Library, Que. (est. 1894) -- Narcissa Farrand Pettes built and donated a library to the village of Knowlton and Brome Township, Quebec, in memory of her late husband, Nathaniel Pettes. In the same year, 1894, the Quebec Legislature enacted *An Act to Incorporate the "Pettes Memorial."* This legislation stipulated that the Pettes building would be "a free public library and reading room, to be open to all honest and respectable persons whomsoever, of every rank in life, without distinction." Also, the building would function as "a lecture hall, to be used in connection with the said library and reading room, and solely for purposes calculated to promote and advance the interests and usefulness of the same." The purpose was clearly Victorian in mindset: the Pettes Memorial was intended to promote "the diffusion of useful knowledge, by

affording free access, to all desiring it, to books, magazines and periodicals, making always the acquisition and maintenance of a library the leading object to be kept in view." An incorporated board of seven trustees was established to oversee the library. Narcissa Pettes also agreed to pay the salary for the librarian, to assume the cost of maintenance during her lifetime, and to leave funds to be invested to meet future annual expenses.

Halifax Citizens' Free Library, N.S. (est. 1864) -- At Halifax, the collections of two previous incorporated subscription libraries, the Mechanics' Library (est. 1831) and the Halifax Library (est. 1823-24), formed the nucleus of the Citizens' Free Library by the mid-1870s in the city hall courthouse. In 1864, the city council accepted a generous offer from Chief Justice William Young, who had purchased the collection of the Mechanics' Library, to administer and to open a library freely to local residents. A Halifax newspaper lent hearty support for 'public institutions of a literary character' especially at modest cost. Later, in 1876, the city bought books from the defunct Halifax Library, which the privileged classes had supported for half a century. In the following year, provincial legislation (40 Vic. chap. 34) permitted municipal funding for the Free Library to pay debts and maintenance costs without resort to direct personal fees: *"The City Council may payout of the general assessment of the City or may add to the sums authorized to be assessed, such a sum not to exceed one thousand two hundred dollars, as may be necessary for the maintenance of the Citizens' Free Library and defraying the expenses thereof."*

A committee of city aldermen parsimoniously managed affairs and the library moved a few times before settling into the city hall in 1890. During this time, the library suffered a chronic shortage of funds, a situation that did not improve in the first part of the 20th-century. Nonetheless, the Citizen's Free Library was the first Canadian instance of 1) ongoing municipal tax support without a specific rate clause that a managing committee could not rely on and 2) municipal administration of a library open to the public without charge at point of access.

In the late Victorian era, commentaries on the rationale for free public libraries serving the general public were becoming commonplace. This evolution in thinking combined with legislative standards, enhanced physical library access, and claims that libraries advanced literacy, educational attainment, and societal progress, reinforced support for libraries. In a more prosperous and educated nation, with wealthier business leaders, an increasingly literate populace, a growing middle-class interested in cultural uplift, and civic-minded leaders, the formation of libraries became a cause--a movement--that attracted promoters and followers. Given the disparate state of local government across the new Dominion, a variety of options emerged after Confederation in 1867 for

alternative methods of governance and private-public financial support for libraries open to the public without charge to users

Further Reading

Moodey, Edgar C. *The Fraser-Hickson Library: An Informal History*. London: Clive Bingley, 1977 at the Internet Archive

Hanson, Elizabeth. "Books for the People: The Fraser Institute, 1885-1900." *Épilogue: Canadian Bulletin for the History of Books, Libraries, and Archives* 11, no. 2 (1996): 1–10

Montreal Free Library. *Analytical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Montreal Free Library*. 3rd ed. Montreal: Montreal Free Library, Library Hall, 146 Bleury Street, 1895 at the Internet Archive.

Lamonde, Yvan. "Un aspect inconnu du débat autour de la bibliothèque publique à Montréal: la Montreal Free Library (1889-)." *Les Cahiers des Dix*, no. 57 (2003): 263–71. https://doi.org/10.7202/1008108ar.

Brief history of the Pettes Memorial Library, Knowlton, Quebec.

Free Public Library (Yarmouth, N.S.), ed. *Catalogue, Free Public Library of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia: Established 1872*. Saint John, N.B.: J. & A. McMillan, 1872.

Friday, December 22, 2017

The British Columbia Free Libraries Act, 1891

British Columbia became the second province to pass an act allowing local governments to establish free libraries in 1891. Generally, municipal conditions were different in B.C. compared to its eastern counterpart, Ontario. There were only a handful of cities and towns able to fund and maintain libraries adequately: the total population of the province in 1891 was 98,173 and Vancouver, with 13,709 people, was the largest city. But libraries in a variety of forms--subscription, mechanics' institutes, literary societies, and commercial circulating libraries--had existed for many years in different localities such as Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster.

Consequently, legislation was introduced in March 1891 that enabled a local council that had received a petition from 100 electors to submit the issue to be voted upon by ratepayers and, if successful, for council to pass a bylaw establishing a free library which might also include a free news-room, or museum, branches, as well as evening classes for artisans, mechanics and workingmen to promote mechanical and manufacturing arts. Essential features of this Act (54 Vic. chap 20) were similar to Ontario's 1882 legislation:

- a board of management composed of the mayor or reeve of a municipality, and three other persons appointed by the council, and three by the public school board (or the board of education) governed the operations of the library;
- councils were mandated to levy a "Free Library Rate," a special annual rate not to exceed one half a mill upon the assessed value of all rateable real property to furnish the estimated budget submitted by the library board each year.;
- all libraries, news-rooms, and museums were to be open to the public, free of all charge;
- mechanics' institute and library associations were authorized to transfer property and assets to a municipality for the purpose of the Act;
- municipal councils were authorized to raise by a special issue of debentures (termed the "Free Library Debentures") amounts required for purchasing and erecting buildings and, in the first instance, for obtaining books and other things required to establish a library.

For the most part, British Columbia's legislation followed Ontario's law; however, one distinctive clause included in the B.C. Act permitted boards to conduct evening classes and to appoint and dismiss salaried teachers or

instructors.

B.C.'s library act was primarily aimed at larger urban centres in a developing province. There was no provision for establishing libraries in the rural districts and no provincial financial or organizational assistance provided to undertake such work. The beneficiaries of the 1891 legislation were communities that had previously struggled to establish a public library by various means: Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster. In Victoria, for example, a public referendum had been held in 1887 to transfer the assets of the Mechanics' Literary Institute to the city for the purposes of establishing a public library. Vancouver's city council had begun granting small amounts for a public library earlier in 1889. New Westminster had provided accommodation in a central building for its library in 1890. Now these communities were eligible for an annual library rate. As well, there was a major unanticipated benefit to the 1891 legislation. A decade later, when Carnegie money became available for free public libraries, all three communities automatically were eligible for a grant to erect a new building.

The 1891 Act marked another late Victorian Canadian milestone in the recognition of free libraries--how to establish and administer a library, what services would be provided, and how operations would be financed. The Act would remain in place until a complete revision was undertaken in 1919.

Further reading on B.C.'s Carnegie library heritage*:*

Vancouver, 1903: now the Carnegie Centre

Victoria, 1906: opened at the at the corner of Yates and Blanshard Streets

Monday, December 04, 2017

The City of Saint John Free Public Library Act, 1883

The 1880s were a critical turning point for free library legislation in Canada. Ontario was not alone in enacting legislation for free public libraries, that is, library service owned and funded by a local government accessible to local residents without charge at the point of service. Unlike Ontario, however, in the Maritime provinces specific legislation for the establishment of a free public library was the typical method chosen by Legislatures. Saint John became the earliest incorporated library to assume this course in 1883.

In the nineteenth century, Saint John was served by various subscription-membership libraries, notably the St. John Mechanics' Institute, in operation from 1839–90, and the St. John Society Library, in operation from 1811–69. Agitation for a free library, similar to the Toronto experience, began as early as the late 1870s. The success of a project which secured more than 2,000 books for a free library led to the appointment of a city commission in 1880 charged with forming a free library. After accommodation in the city's central market building was secured, the library eventually opened on 13 June 1883.

A month before, on May 3rd, a provincial act had established the library's legal basis. This Act allowed for appointment by city council of a nine-person board of commissioners to manage the library. The law allowed city council to assess $500 per annum for the library maintenance (this trifling amount was raised to $2,500 by an 1890 amendment). One article authorized council to appoint women as commissioners, not to exceed four in number. In fact, a committee entirely composed of ladies had been instrumental in helping raise funds to create the library before 1883 and it continued to assist in this way after the library opened. Each year, the library was required to submit an annual report to council; in effect, the library board was a semi-independent body within local government.

The act for St. John was singular in nature, shorter, and different from the Ontario enabling law of 1882. For example, it did not have a specified rate clause; it did not stipulate that commissioners could operate branches or newsrooms; it formally provided for bequests and gifts to be held by the library for its own use; it did not authorize appointments by school boards; and it did not enable the transfer of property by a mechanics' institute. Because of the circumstances leading to the library's foundation, there was no need for electors to vote on establishing the library.

Although the St. John law did not serve as a model for other communities in New Brunswick (or Nova Scotia), it did demonstrate an interest in the formation of

Canadian free libraries at the local level by means of public statutes, a concept that was repeated in British Columbia (1891) and Manitoba (1899) before the end of the 19th century. The principle of local municipal appropriations, however, was emulated later in separate acts for free public libraries at Woodstock in 1912 and Moncton in 1927 before a general New Brunswick library was enacted in 1929.

CAP. LVIII.

An Act to establish a Free Public Library in the City of Saint John.

Sections
1 City Council to appoint Board of Commissioners.
2 Commissioners incorporated.
3 Continuance and succession of Commissioners; proviso.
4 After organization, property to vest in Commissioners.
5 Powers and duties of Commissioners.
6 Commissioners to make bye laws.
7 Females may be appointed to Board of Commissioners, proviso.
8 Vacancy in Board, how filled.
9 Report of receipts and expenditure to be made to Council annually.
10 City Council to order an annual assessment.
11 Assessment, to whom paid, and how applied.
Passed 3rd May 1883.

WHEREAS a number of persons have made large and valuable gifts of Books and Records, and also contributions in money, for the purpose of founding in the City of Saint John a Free Public Library, and it is desirable that a corporate body should be constituted for the management and continuance thereof;—
Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governor, Legislative Council, and Assembly, as follows:—

1. It shall be the duty of the Common Council of the City of Saint John within sixty days after the passing of this Act to appoint a Board of nine persons, to be Commissioners for the management of a Free Public Library in the City of Saint John.

2. The persons so appointed by the Common Council shall, upon acceptance of the office, constitute and be the Board of Commissioners of the Free Public Library, and they and their successors are hereby constituted a body corporate by the name of "The Commissioners of the Free Public Library of the City of Saint John," and by that name shall have the general powers and privileges by law incident to Corporations.

3. The continuance and succession of the said Corporation shall be as follows:—
Upon the first day of June in each year after the year of the passing of this Act,

two of such persons so appointed shall retire from the Board, in the order hereinafter in this Section prescribed, and two persons shall be annually appointed by the Common Council to fill the vacancies so made: The two persons last and eighth named upon the first appointment shall first retire, and in the next succeeding year the seventh and sixth named in the first appointment shall retire; and in the then next year the fifth and fourth; and in the next year the third and second; and the next year the first named in the first appointment shall retire, and also the first in seniority who may have been appointed to fill the first vacancy by retirement; and thereafter two persons in each year shall retire in the order of seniority of appointment or re-appointment; provided that the Common Council may in their discretion re-appoint any person or persons so retiring: Three Commissioners shall constitute a quorum, and shall be at all times a sufficient number for the legal continuance of the Corporate body.

4. Upon the organization of the Board of Commissioners under this Act, all books, records, moneys and other property now held by certain Trustees heretofore appointed by the Common Council to receive and hold such property, shall vest in the said Corporation constituted under this Act; and upon delivery thereof to the said Corporation, the Trustees shall be and thereupon are hereby discharged of all further responsibility, and relieved of all trusts and duties relating thereto.

5. The said Corporation constituted under this Act shall have full power to take and hold all books and other property coming into their hands for the purposes of this Act, and to receive and take all gifts, bequests and grants of money or chattels of any description, to be held by them for the purposes of this Act.

6. The said Corporation shall have full power and authority from time to time to make and ordain bye laws not contrary to law, for the management and control of the property held by them and the appointment of their officers; and to establish rules and regulations for the care and use of the books and other chattels for the maintenance of a Free Public Library.

7. In the first or any subsequent appointment under this Act, it shall be lawful for the Common Council in their discretion to appoint any female or females on the Board of Commissioners; provided that the female members at such Board shall not at any time exceed four in number.

8. Whenever any vacancy occurs in the Board of Commissioners by death or resignation, such vacancy shall be reported by the Board to the Common Council, who shall proceed to fill such vacancy by the appointment of another Commissioner, who shall hold office for the residue of the term of the person whose place he fills.

9. The Corporation constituted under this Act shall make an annual Report to the

Common Council, with a statement of receipts and expenditures.

10. It shall be the duty of the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of Saint John in Common Council, in every year after the present year from and after the passing of this Act, and they are hereby authorized and empowered to order and direct an assessment upon the whole City of Saint John and the inhabitants thereof, in addition to the yearly assessment for other civic purposes, for the sum of five hundred dollars besides the costs of levying and collecting the same, to be assessed, levied and collected at the time of levying and collecting other City rates, and therewith and in the manner provided by The Saint John City Assessment Act 1882, or any other Act for the time being in force relating to the levying, assessing and collecting of rates and taxes in the City of Saint John.

11. The moneys so assessed and collected under the last preceding Section of this Act shall be paid to and received by the Chamberlain of the City of Saint John, and shall be by him paid over as collected to the Commissioners of the Free Public Library in aid of the expenses of management of such Public Library.

*****

The library opening in June 1883 marked the beginning of legislated tax support for residents in Saint John. After the Council authorized establishment of the library and appointed Commissioners at the end of May, the new members quickly established rules and regulations for use of the library's limited 2,000 book collection that were typical of 19th century libraries, such as:

2. Any inhabitant of the City of St. John, over twelve years of ago, who is recommended by the Mayor, or any Alderman or Councillor of the City, or any one of the Library Commissioners, and who shall sign an obligation to observe all the existing rules and regulations of the library, and all that may be subsequently adopted, shall have the right to take books therefrom, so long as he or she shall comply with the same.

4. No person shall be allowed more than one volume at a time. No book shall be retained by the person borrowing it more than ten days; nor shall the person returning the book be at liberty to retake the same until it shall have remained in the library one full library day.

12. All persons visiting the Library Room will be required to demean themselves quietly, and no unnecessary conversation will be allowed in the room.

The library was an immediate successful civic addition. By the autumn, it was open on a regular basis on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons from 2 to 6 pm., and in the evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday and Saturday.

Thursday, November 30, 2017

The Ontario Free Libraries Act, 1882

The first province-wide legislation to establish free public libraries in Canadian cities, towns, and villages was enacted in Ontario in 1882 (*Ontario Statutes*, 1882, chap. 22). These libraries were available to municipal residents at the point of entry without direct charge and were financed primarily by local tax revenue. The Ontario Act exemplified Victorian liberal-democratic ideas about local control, municipal taxation, and public access.

London Public Library, built in 1895

To begin the process, a petition approved by ratepayers in a municipal election was required prior to formation of a library board by council bylaw--in effect, boards were created by popular assent. Second, three elective bodies normally shared board appointments: the municipal council and the public- and separate-school authorities. In theory, this practice helped safeguard library boards from sectarian and party interests. Third, appointments were for limited two- or three-year periods on an overlapping arrangement to allow for continuity, an important planning consideration at a time when municipal terms of office were usually only one year in length. Finally, the library board was entitled by law to levy a modest ‘Public Library Rate’—originally a maximum one-half mill on taxable assessment—and was obligated to submit its yearly estimates to council for approval. With an eye to the future, article 10 of the Act permitted the managers of local Mechanics' Institutes or Library Associations to transfer property to a municipality for the purposes of establishing a free public library. After Guelph citizens voted to establish a free library in January 1883 (officially founded on 10

February), the Mechanics' Institute became the first to transfer its holdings to the newly established Guelph Free Public Library on 15 March 1883.

The adoption of permissive legislation that specified semi-independent, appointed board status, secure (but modest) funding, and free access for local residents served Ontario reasonably well for decades. The law satisfied the liberal-democratic belief that libraries generally were educative institutions and the conservative (or elitist) preference for non-elective offices in which 'prominent persons' could exercise some form of direction in local government. The Ontario 1882 Act became a very influential model for subsequent legislation in western provinces: BC (1891), Manitoba (1899), Saskatchewan (1906), and Alberta (1907). In Ontario itself, the legislation was revised many times in the following eighty years and completely revamped in 1966 by a new Public Libraries Act to address the realities of rural library service and changing political realities in provincial and local government.

This general provincial act was, of course, permissive legislation allowing municipalities to establish free public libraries. Citizens in local communities were required to circulate petitions and submit the issue in local municipal elections. Nonetheless, the mandated principle stipulated in article 9 -- *"All libraries, news-rooms, and museums established under this Act shall be open to the public, free of all charge"* -- would subsequently become a centerpiece for promotion of public library service in Canada.

The requoted Act follows:

CHAPTER 22.

An Act to provide for the establishment of Free Libraries

[*Assented to 10th March,* 1882.]

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:–

Short title
1. This Act may be cited as "The Free Libraries Act, 1882."

Establishment of free libraries
2. A free library may be established in any city, town, or incorporated village, in manner hereinafter provided.
(2) Where a free library is so established, there may, without any proceedings for the purpose under this Act, be connected with the library, a free news-room, or museum, or both; and there may be established a branch library, or branch libraries, and a branch news-room, or branch news-rooms, in the municipality.

(3) In case a petition is presented to the Council of a city, town, or incorporated village, signed by not less than one hundred electors in the case of a city, or not less than sixty in the case of a town, or not less than thirty in the case of an incorporated village, praying for the establishment of a free library under this Act; the council may pass a by-law giving effect to the petition, with the assent of the electors qualified to vote at municipal elections given before the final passing of the by-law as provided by the Municipal Law.
(4) In case the vote of the electors is adverse to the by-law, no new by-law for the same purpose shall afterwards be passed by the Council, to be submitted to the electors within the same municipal year.

Appointment of Board of Management
3. In case of the establishment of a Free Library under this Act, the general management, regulation and control of the library, and of the news-room and museum (if any) shall be vested in and exercised by a Board to be called the Board of Management; which Board shall be a body politic and corporate, and shall be composed of the mayor of the city or town, or the reeve of the village, and three other persons to be appointed by the Council, three by the Public School Board, or the Board of Education, of the municipality, and two by the Trustees of the Separate School, if any.
(2) No person who is a member of the body entitled to appoint shall be qualified to be a member of the Board of Management.
(3) Of the representatives appointed by the Council, and the Public School Board, or Board of Education and Separate School Trustees, respectively, one shall retire annually, but may be re-appointed.
(4) Of the three members first appointed by the Council, and Public School Board, or Board of Education respectively, one shall hold office until the first day of February after his appointment, one until the first day of February in the following year, and one until the same day in the year next thereafter; and of the two members first appointed by the Separate School Trustees, one shall hold office until the first day of February after his appointment, and one until the first day of February of the following year, but every member of the Board of Management shall continue in office after the time named until his successor is appointed.
(5) In case of a vacancy by the death or resignation of a member, or from any cause other than the expiration of the time for which he was appointed, the member appointed in his place shall hold office for the remainder of his term.
(6) Subject to these provisions, each of the members appointed by the Council, or Public School Board, or Board of Education, shall hold office for three years from the first day of February in the year in which he is appointed; and each of the members appointed by Separate School Trustees, for two years from the first day of February in the year in which he is appointed.
(7) The first appointment of members of the said Board shall be made at the first meeting of the appointing Council or Board, after the final passing of the by-law. The annual appointments thereafter shall be made at the first meeting of the

appointing Council or Board, after the first day of January in every year; and any vacancy arising from any cause, other than the expiration of the time for which the member was appointed, shall be filled at the first meeting thereafter of the appointing Council or Board. But if for any reason appointments are not made at the said dates, the same shall be made as soon as may be thereafter.
(8) The Board of Management shall elect one of their number as chairman, who shall hold office for one year; he shall preside at meetings of the Board when present; in his absence a chairman may be chosen *pro tem*. The chairman shall have the same right of voting as the other members of the Board, and no other.
(9) The Board shall meet at least once every calendar month, and at such other times as they may think fit.
(10) The chairman or any two members may summon a special meeting of the Board by giving at least two days' notice in writing to each member, specifying the purpose for which the meeting is called.
(11) No business shall be transacted at any general or special meeting unless four members are present.
(12) All orders and proceedings of the Board shall be entered in books to be kept by them for that purpose, and shall be signed by the chairman for the time being.
(13) The orders and proceedings so entered and purporting to be so signed, shall be deemed to be original orders and proceedings, and (such books) may be produced and read as evidence (of the orders and proceedings) upon any judicial proceeding whatsoever.

Duties of Board
4. Subject to the restrictions and provisions hereinafter contained, the Board are, from time to time, to procure, erect, or rent the necessary buildings for the purposes of the library or of the library, news-room and museum (as the case may be); to purchase books, newspapers, reviews, magazines, maps and specimens of art and science, for the use of the library, news-room and museum, and to do all things necessary for keeping the same in a proper state of preservation and repair; and to purchase and provide the necessary fuel, lighting, and in other similar matters; and are to appoint and dismiss, as they see occasion, the salaried officers and servants employed.

Board may make by-laws respecting use of library
5. The Board may make by-laws or rules for the safety and use of the library, news-room, and museum, and for the admission of the public thereto; and for regulating all other matters and things whatsoever connected with the management of the library and of the news-room and museum (if any), and with the management of all property of every kind under their control for the purposes of this Act; and the Board may impose penalties for breaches of the by-laws or rules, not exceeding ten dollars for any offence; and may from time to time repeal, alter, vary, or re-enact any such by-laws or rules.
(2) After any such by-laws or rules have been published weekly for at least two weeks in a newspaper published in the municipality, or in a newspaper circulated

therein if no newspaper is published therein, the by-laws and rules so published shall be binding on all parties concerned; but any judge or magistrate, before whom a penalty imposed thereby is sought to be recovered, may order a part only of such penalty to be paid, if he thinks fit.
(3) Nothing herein contained shall preclude the recovery of the value of articles or things damaged, or the amount of damage sustained, from parties liable for the same.

Board to make yearly estimates
6. The Board of Management shall, in the month of March in every year, make up or cause to be made up, an estimate of the sums required to pay, during the ensuing financial year:
The interest of any money borrowed as hereinafter mentioned;
The amount of the sinking fund; and
The expense of maintaining and managing the libraries,
news-rooms or museums under their control, and
of making the purchases required therefor.

(2) The Board shall report their estimate to the council not later than the first day of April in each year.

Board to keep regular accounts
7. The Board of Management shall keep distinct and regular accounts of their receipts, payments, credits and liabilities, and the accounts shall be audited by the auditors of the municipality, in like manner as other accounts of the municipality, and shall thereafter be laid before the Council by the Board of Management.

Special rate for library purposes
8. For the purpose of providing for the expenses necessary for carrying this Act into effect, the council of the municipality, in addition to all other rates and assessments levied and assessed for municipal purposes, shall levy and assess from year to year a special annual rate sufficient to furnish the amount estimated by the said Board to be required as aforesaid, but not exceeding one half of a mill in the dollar, upon the assessed value of all ratable real and personal property, such rate to be called "The Free Library Rate."
(2) The council may also, subject as hereinafter provided, on the requisition of the Board of Management, raise by a special issue of debentures of the municipality, to be termed "Free Library Debentures," such sums as may be required for the purpose of purchasing and erecting the necessary buildings, and, in the first instance, for obtaining books and other things required.
(3) During the currency of the debentures so issued the council shall withhold, and retain as a first charge on the said annual rate, such amount as shall be required to meet the annual interest of the debentures, and a sinking fund for the retirement thereof as the debentures become due, such sinking fund to be invested and dealt with as in the case of other municipal debentures.

(4) All moneys levied or raised as aforesaid shall be received by the treasurer of the municipality in the same manner as other municipal funds, and be paid out by him on the orders of the Board; save as to the amount required to meet the interest and provide a sinking fund for debentures issued as aforesaid.
(5) It shall not be necessary to submit to the electors a by-law authorizing the issue of debentures, provided the annual sum required to meet the annual interest and sinking fund do not, with a reasonable allowance for annual expenses, exceed the said limit of half a mill in the dollar.

Admission to be free
9. All libraries, news-rooms, and museums established under this Act shall be open to the public, free of all charge.

Mechanics' Institutes may transfer property to corporation of municipality for the purposes of this Act
10. At any time after the adoption of this Act in any municipality, any Mechanics' Institute or Library Association in the municipality may by agreement with the Board transfer to the corporation of the municipality, for the purposes of this Act, all or any property, real or personal, of the Institute or Association; but any transfer which, but for this section, the Institute or Association would not have authority to make, shall only be made in the manner provided by the Act respecting, the power of Mechanics' Institutes and Library Associations to deal with their real estate (42 Vic., cap. 29).
(2) In case the transfer is to be made on terms involving the assumption of any liability of the Institute or Association, or the payment of any money in consideration of the transfer, the agreement shall not be binding, unless approved of and consented to by by-law of the municipal council.

Act to be incorporated with Municipal and Assessment Acts
11. Upon the coming into operation of this Act in any municipality, it shall, as regards such municipality, be deemed to be incorporated with the Municipal and Assessment Acts from time to time affecting such municipality.

Forms
12. The forms in the schedule hereto may be used for the purposes of this Act, or any forms to the like effect and the recitals contained in the said forms shall be deemed sufficient, any provisions in the Municipal Act to the contrary notwithstanding.

SCHEDULE.

FORM A.

PETITION.

To the Municipal Council of

We, the undersigned electors of the said city of [*or as the case may be*], respectfully pray that a Free Library may be established in this municipality under the Free Libraries Act, 1882.

FORM B.

BY-LAW FOR ESTABLISHING A FREE LIBRARY WITH THE ASSENT OF THE ELECTORS.

A By-law to provide for the establishment of a Free Library in the city of [*or as the case may be*].

Whereas electors have petitioned the council of the said city of [*or as the case may be*], praying for the establishment of a Free Library under the Free Libraries Act, 1882;

Be it therefore enacted by the said Municipal Council of the said city of *[or as the case may be*] that, in case the assent of the electors is given to this By-law, a Free Library be established in this municipality in accordance with the provisions of the Free Libraries Act, 1882.

And be it further enacted that the votes of the electors be taken on this By-law on the day of , 18 , commencing at nine o'clock in the morning and continuing until five o'clock in the afternoon, at the under-mentioned places : [*Here insert* (1) *the ward;* (2) *the polling sub-division;* (3) *the place for holding the poll and the name of the Deputy Returning Officer*.

That on the day of next, at his office in the , at o'clock in the noon, the [*Mayor, Reeve, or as the case may be*] shall appoint in writing, signed by him, two persons to attend to the final summing up of the votes by the Clerk, and one person to attend at each polling place on behalf of the persons interested in and desirous of promoting the passing of this By-Law, and a like number on behalf of the persons interested in and desirous of opposing the passage of this By-law.

That the Clerk of the said Municipal Corporation shall attend at the at the hour of o'clock in the noon, on the day of , 18 , to sum up the number of votes given for or against the By-law.

Notice by Clerk.

The above is a true copy of a proposed By-law which will be taken into consideration by the Council of after one month from the day of , 18 , being the date of the first publication thereof, and the polls for taking the votes of the electors will be held at the hour, day and places named in the said By-law.

FORM C.

BY-LAW FOR THE ISSUE OF FREE LIBRARY DEBENTURES WHERE THE ASSENT OF THE ELECTORS IS NOT REQUIRED.

A By-law authorizing the issue of debentures for the purposes of a Free library.

Whereas a By-Law of the Municipal Council of the city of [*or as the case may be*] , was passed on the day of establishing a Free Library in this municipality under the Free Libraries Act, 1882;

And whereas a sum of $ is required for the purposes of acquiring a site, erecting buildings, etc. [*as the case may be*], for the said Free Library, as appears by the special estimate for that purpose furnished by the Board of Management to the Council;

And whereas it will require the sum of annually for a period of years, to pay the interest of the said debt, and the sum of $ annually during the said period for the forming of a sinking fund of per centum per annum for the payment of the debt created by this By-Law, making in all the sum of annually as aforesaid ;

And whereas it is necessary that such annual sum of shall in each year during the said period of years be charged on the special rate mentioned in the eighth section of the said Act.

Be it therefore enacted by the said Municipal Council of the said city [*or as the case may be*] of [or *as the case may be*], pursuant to the provisions of the Free Libraries. Act, 1882.

That the Mayor [*or as the case may be*], of the said municipality may borrow on the credit of the said annual Library rate as aforesaid, and may issue Free Library Debentures of the corporation to that amount in sums of not less than $100 each, and payable within years from the date thereof, with interest at the rate of per centum per annum, that is to say in [*insert the manner of payment, whether in annual payments or otherwise*], such debentures to be payable at and to have attached to them coupons for the payment of interest.

That during years, the sum of shall be raised and retained annually for the payment of interest on said debentures, and also the sum of for the purpose of forming a sinking fund of per centum per annum for the payment of the principal of the said loan of in years, making in all the sum of to be raised and charged annually as aforesaid on the special

Library rate unless the said debentures shall be sooner paid, for the purpose of paying the said sum of , with interest thereon as aforesaid.

FORM D.

FREE LIBRARY DEBENTURE.

No. Province of Ontario. $

[*Name of Municipality.*]

Under and by virtue of the Free Libraries Act, 1882, and of By-law No. of the Corporation of passed under the powers in said Act contained,

The Corporation of promise to pay the bearer or in the sum of $ on the day of A.D. and the half yearly coupons hereto attached as the same shall severally become due.

[L.S.] A. B.

Mayor [*or as the case may be*].

C.D.

Treasurer.

Friday, November 03, 2017

Canadian Act for Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes, 1851

By the middle of the 19th century in the Province of Canada (present day Ontario and Quebec) many local groups had formed library associations and mechanics' institutes. A few organizations, such as the Toronto Mechanics' Institute, Quebec Library, or the Montreal Mercantile Library Association, were incorporated under separate laws in the 1840s. Legislators recognized the need to provide general public legislation regulating the establishment, holdings, and activities of dozens of existing and potential new subscription/membership organizations. Robert Bell, the MP for Lanark (Ontario), introduced a Bill to facilitate the formation of institutes and library associations in the 3rd Parliament of the United Provinces in summer 1851. The Act did not stipulate public funding; however, legislative grants were made to dozens of institutes and associations (as well as combinations of both) each year until 1858 when funding ceased due to an economic downturn.

Toronto Mechanics' Institute, n.d.

The 1851 legislation continued in force after Confederation in Ontario and Quebec under Chapter 86 of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, 1859. The law was important because it fortified the concept that a "public library" could one that was accessible to all residents of a community, but not generally free because it required voluntary personal payments. This type of public library

formation was readily accepted by the mid-19th century in British North America. The Act served as a guide for other provincial jurisdictions to formalize library development. Nova Scotia passed a similar law, ‘An Act Respecting Library Associations and Institutes,’ on 18 April 1872, as did British Columbia on 24 February 1871, ‘An Act Respecting Literary Societies and Mechanics’ Institutes.’ Association Libraries would coexist into the Twentieth Century alongside Free Libraries--ones supported with municipal taxation and not requiring membership fees at the entrance point.

The 1851 Act was 'enabling legislation' which became the basic foundation for general provincial public library acts in post-Confederation Canada. The 1851 law (and subsequent similar provincial acts) contained influential ideas about public libraries. It recognized that a public library would be available to persons through voluntary decisions, not mandated legal provisions. It established that libraries would be governed by local boards of trustees independent from control by municipal politicians, a ‘special purpose body’ in public administrative terminology. Further, it provided public recognition of libraries as incorporated bodies through public legislation, thereby creating the opportunity for provincial grants in the public interest that supplemented local fundraising efforts. Consequently, hundreds of library associations and mechanics' institutes were formed and continued in provincial legislation in many provinces into the 20th century.

The re-quoted 1851 text follows:

1851—14 & 15 VICTORIAE, CHAPTER 86

An Act to provide for the incorporation and better Management of Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes

[*30th August, 1851*]

WHEREAS it is expedient to encourage the establishment of Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes, and for that purpose to provide for the incorporation of such Institutions, and to grant them certain powers enabling them better to protect their property and manage their affairs: Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, constituted and assembled by virtue of and under the authority of an Act passed in the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and intituled, *An Act to re-unite the Province of Upper and*

Lower Canada, and for the Government of Canada, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That any number of persons, not less than ten, having subscribed, or holding together not less than Twenty-five Pounds in money or money's worth, for the use of their intended Institution, may make and sign a Declaration (in duplicate) of their intention to establish a Library Association or a Mechanics' Institute, or both, (as the case may be,) at some place to be named in such Declaration, in which they shall also state the corporate name of the Institution, its purpose, the amount of money or money's worth subscribed by them respectively, or held by them for the use thereof, the names of those who are to be the first Trustees for managing its affairs, and the mode in which their successors are to be appointed, or new Members of the Corporation admitted, or in which Bye-laws are to be made for such appointment or admission, or for any other purpose, or for all purposes, and generally such other particulars and provisions as they may think necessary, not being contrary to this Act or to Law: or in case of a Mechanics' Institute or Library Association (or both united) already established or in existence, then, that the Directors, Trustees or the Office Bearers and Committee thereof for the time being, may make and sign a Declaration as aforesaid, of their wish or determination to become incorporated, according to the provisions of this Act, stating in such Declaration the Corporate Name to be assumed by such Institution or United Institutions,—and also with such Declaration, to file in the manner hereinafter provided, a copy of the Constitution and Bye-laws of such Institution and or United Institutions, together with a general statement of the nature and amount of all the property, real or personal, held by or in trust for such Institution or United Institutions: and one duplicate of such Declaration shall then be filed in the Office of the Registrar of Deeds for the County by one of the subscribing parties, who shall, before such Registrar, acknowledge the execution thereof by himself, and declare the same to have been executed by the other parties thereto, either in person or by their Attorneys; and the Registrar shall then keep one of the said duplicates, and deliver the other to the person filing the same, with a Certificate of the same having been so filed, and the execution attested before him, and such duplicate, or any copy thereof certified by such Registrar, shall be *primâ facie* evidence of the facts alledged in such Declaration and Certificate.

II. And be it enacted, That when the formalities aforesaid have been complied with, the persons having signed such Declaration as aforesaid, or the Directors, Trustees or the Office Bearers and Committee for the time being, of any such Institution or United Institutions now established or in existence as aforesaid, and their successors, shall be a body corporate and politic, and shall have the powers, rights and immunities, vested in such bodies under the Interpretation Act and by Law, with power to such Corporation, in their corporate name, from time to time,

and at all times hereafter, to have, take, acquire, hold, possess and enjoy to them, and to their successors, to and for the uses and purposes of such Corporation, any messuages, lands, tenements or hereditaments, of what nature or kind soever, situate within this Province; but the yearly value of the real property to be held by any such Corporation, shall never exceed One Hundred Pounds currency.

III. And be it enacted, That the affairs of such Corporation shall be managed by the Directors or Trustees thereof for the time then being, appointed as hereinafter, or by any By-law of such Corporation provided, who, or a majority of whom, shall have full power to exercise all the powers of the Corporation, and to act in its name and on its behalf, and to use its Seal, subject always to any provisions limiting the exercise of such powers in the Declaration aforesaid, or in any By-law of the Corporation; and such Trustees, or a majority of them, shall have power to make By-laws binding the Members and Officers thereof, and such others as shall agree to be bound by them, for all purposes relative to the affairs and business of the Corporation, except as to matters touching which it is provided by the Declaration aforesaid, that By-laws shall be made in some other manner.

IV. And be it enacted, That the Members of such Corporation, at their Annual Meeting, to be held on such day as may be provided by any By-law of the said Corporation, may choose from among themselves a President, and may appoint (except in so far as it may be otherwise provided in the Declaration or By-laws) a Librarian, Treasurer, Secretary, Lecturer, and such other Officers and servants of the Corporation as they may think necessary, and fix and pay their remuneration; and also a Board of Directors or Trustees of such Corporation, who shall hold office for one year, or such further time as may be hereinafter limited or permitted.

V. And be it enacted, That a failure to elect Trustees on any day appointed for that purpose by the Declaration aforesaid, or by any By-laws, shall not operate the dissolution of the Corporation, but the Trustees then in office shall remain in office until their successors are elected, which they may be (if no other provision be made therefor by the Declaration or By-laws) at any Meeting of the Members of the Corporation at which a majority of such Members shall be present, in whatever way such

VI. And be it enacted, That any such Corporation shall have power by its By-laws to impose a fine not exceeding One Pound, on any Member contravening the same, or on any person not being a Member of the Corporation, who shall in writing have agreed to obey the By-law for the contravention whereof it is imposed; and any such fine, if incurred, and any subscription or other sum of money which any Member or other person may have agreed to pay to the said

Corporation, for his subscription to the funds of the Corporation for any certain time, or for the loan of any book or instrument, or for the right of entry to the rooms of the Corporation, or of attending any lectures, or for any other privilege or advantage afforded him by such Corporation, may be recovered by the Corporation by action in any Court having jurisdiction in civil matters to the amount, on allegation and proof of the signature of defendant to some writing by which he shall have undertaken to pay such subscription, or to obey such By-law, and of this breach of such undertaking, which breach shall be presumed until the contrary be shewn, as regards any promise to pay any sum of money, and may be proved by the oath of any one credible witness, as regards the contravention of any such By-law; and in any such action, or any other to which such Corporation may be a party, any Member or Officer of the Corporation shall be a competent witness, and any copy of any By-law bearing the signature of the defendant, or bearing the Seal of the Corporation, and the signature of some person purporting to have affixed any such Seal by authority of the Corporation, shall be *primâ facie* evidence of such By-law; and all fines so recovered shall belong to the Corporation for the use thereof.

VII. And be it enacted, That any such Corporation may, if it be so stated in the said Declaration, be at the same time a Mechanics' Institute or a Library Association, or either of them, and their business shall accordingly be the ordinary and usual business of a Mechanics' Institute or of a Library Association, or both, as the case may be, and no other, but may embrace all things necessary and useful for the proper and convenient carrying on of such business; and their funds and property shall be appropriated and used for purposes legitimately appertaining to such business, and for no other.

VIII. And be it enacted, That if it be provided in such Declaration as aforesaid, or by the By-laws of the Corporation, that the shares of the Members, or of any class of Members, in the property of the Corporation, shall be transferable, then they shall be transferable accordingly, in such way, and subject to such conditions, as shall be mentioned in such Declaration, or in the By-laws of the Corporation, if by such Declaration, such transfers are to be regulated by them; and all such shares shall be personal property, and by such Declaration of By-laws provision may be made for the forfeiture of such shares in cases to be therein named, or for preventing the transfer thereof to others than persons of some certain description, or resident within some certain locality.

IX. And be it enacted, That provision may be made for the dissolution of such Corporation, by the Declaration aforesaid, or it may be therein provided, that such provision may be made by the By-laws of the Corporation to be hereafter passed: Provided that no such dissolution shall take place until all the liabilities of the Corporation are discharged.

X. And be it enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall prevent any Mechanics' Institute or Library Association (or both united) from being and becoming incorporated by a separate Act of Parliament, as if this Act had not been passed; nor shall this Act be held in any way to affect or extend to any Mechanics' Institute, or Library Association already incorporated.

Five years after its passage, the 1851 Act was amended to allow local boards of management to hold property of value up to £500. The amended act, which applied to Canada West (Ontario) and Canada East (Quebec) follows:

CHAPTER 51 — 19 VICTORIA

An Act to amend the Act for incorporating Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes.

[*Assented to 19th June, 1856*]

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the second section of the Act passed in the session held in the fourteenth and fifteenth years of Her Majesty's Reign, and intituled, An Act for the incorporation and better management of Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes, so as to enable such institutions in certain towns and villages to hold property to a larger amount than the sum therein limited: Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly of Canada, enacts as follows:

I. From and after the passing of this Act, it shall be lawful for any Library Association or Mechanics' Institute incorporated under the said Act, and situate in any village or town having of more than three thousand inhabitants or more, to hold real property not exceeding in annual value the sum of five hundred pounds; and for any Library Association or Mechanics' Institute incorporated under the said Act, and situate in any town or city not having more than three thousand inhabitants, to hold real property not exceeding in annual value the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds; any thing in the said section to the contrary notwithstanding.

Thursday, October 26, 2017

Alexander Morris' Public Library Bill for Pre-Confederation Canada, 1866

My article on public library legislation that was not passed by legislators of the United Canadas in 1866. Originally published in *Ex Libris Association Newsletter* 44 (Fall 2008): 10-13. The bill's sponsor, Alexander Morris, was a Liberal-Conservative member for the riding of Lanark South (Canada West) in the Legislative Assembly. The text of Morris' 1866 bill, discharged in August 1866 at the end of the Province of Canada's 8th Parliament (1863-66), is included at the end. Morris supported the concept of free public libraries but also allowed a role for potential donors to contribute to the support and management of local libraries. By clicking on each page, the article can be read online through a web browser.

A biography for Alexander Morris is at the Dictionary of Canadian Biography website [at this link](#).

10 ELAN *Number 44/Fall 2008*

Alexander Morris' Public Library Bill, 1866
BY LORNE BRUCE

In the Fall 2007 issue of *ELAN*, I reviewed the first of two pre-Confederation public library bills concerning Egerton Ryerson's library system and the 1851 Act on Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes. The 1852 bill, introduced by William Henry Boulton, was a premature effort to allow municipalities to establish free public libraries at a time when the Province of Canada had provided generous legislative opportunities for their establishment and financial sustenance as well. Yet, despite the expansion of Ryerson's system from 1850 to 1870 and the growth of libraries in voluntary associations and in mechanics' institutes immediately after 1851, a second bill, authored by Alexander Morris, appeared in 1866 during the last session of the 8th Parliament of Canada. This short session took place in the newly completed parliament buildings at Ottawa before elections in 1867 heralded a new federal Canadian state. It was the final occasion for enacting or revising statutes pertaining to government functions and bodies that would come under the authority of two new provinces, Ontario and Quebec.

Alexander Morris' bill on free public libraries was typical "long legislation": 20 sections that blended the voluntary tradition embodied in 1851 legislative provisions with the new powers of municipal government that had appeared in Ontario in 1849 and Quebec in 1855.[1] The bill, too long to reproduce here, is available at www.uoguelph.ca/~lbruce/documents/1866-Bill-Free-Libraries.htm. Its basic features were

- cities and towns over 5,000 enabled to form "free public libraries" [s 1]
- mayor or two justices of the peace may call a public meeting of ratepayers to attain 2/3 adoption by ratepayers, then deposit proceedings with country registrar [s 1-3]
- board of nine trustees (six elected and three appointed separately by donors) appointed each year at separate annual meetings [s 6-7]
- board meets at least monthly and appoints president and subordinate officers [s 10]
- annual inspection of accounts by auditors elected at annual meeting [s 12]
- trustees have power to levy a tax of 1/2 ¢ on rateable property of municipality [s 13]
- board provides books, newspapers, maps, etc., for library and free reading rooms under regulations made by trustees [s 14]
- board may purchase land to erect buildings, hold mortgage, effect repairs [s 5 & 15]
- trustees can establish fines for infractions of rules and recover losses [s 17]
- libraries and branches to be "open to public free of charge" [s 18]

Morris introduced his bill for first reading on August 1, when it was ordered to be read a second time. According to the parliamentary accounts in the *Ottawa Times* and *Montreal Herald*, Morris indicated that he did not expect the bill to pass because of its late timing but hoped to encourage the future formation of free libraries.[2] A week later, on August 7, the order to proceed was discharged and his bill withdrawn. There were many bills discharged on this day, and it is plausible that parliamentary members were clearing the legislative agenda prior to ending the session in mid-August.[3] Because municipal and educational affairs were to become provincial responsibilities under the British North America Act of 1867, most members probably were concerned with forthcoming federal issues at this time or believed that existing libraries in mechanics' institutes, such as the one in Ottawa that received $300 per annum from Parliament and had recently profited from "the large addition of government employees," were sufficient to meet public needs.[4]

Alexander Morris (1826-1889), a Conservative from a prominent Upper Canadian family in Perth, was first elected in 1861 as the representative from Lanark South.[5] He entered the legal profession in the 1850s and authored a number of works on Canadian topics, such as Nova Britannia (1853), which predicted a larger Canadian federation. He played a supportive role in the pre-Confederation period and notably helped broker the 1864 Great Coalition between John A. Macdonald's Conservatives, George Brown's Clear Grits, and George-Etienne Cartier's Bleus that led to Confederation. Morris was active in community affairs – he had been an executive officer in the Montreal Mercantile Library Association in 1849 – and he must have thought that there was a need for library legislation in 1866. Evidently, the member from Lanark was keen to propose a different approach to establishing and maintaining public libraries, unrestricted by the acts of 1850 and 1851 that were still in effect.

To support this view, a review of the 15 years following 1851 indicates that a different concept of free public library service had begun to emerge in Canada West, one influenced by contemporary American and British developments. Lawyers or municipal officials, such as Morris, would have been familiar with English legislation, originally introduced by William Ewart in 1850, which had been extended to Scotland, Wales, and Ireland in subsequent revisions. Indeed, in the first part of 1866, the British library act was again amended to facilitate incorporation outside cities and remove the burdensome population limitation.[6] To the south, four American states – New Hampshire (1849), Massachusetts (1851), Maine (1854), and Vermont (1865) – had already adopted short legislation enabling local municipalities to establish and maintain free public libraries as enthusiasm for public libraries based in district school jurisdictions faded. This type of free library was gaining many advocates, including the American Social Science Association, which published a short manual, *Free Public Libraries, Suggestions on their Foundation and Administration* in 1871, to encourage their formation.

In the two Canadas, the number of mechanics' institutes and library

associations had rapidly increased following 1851 to about 143 by 1858, but many of these were small operations that local groups formed to acquire annual parliamentary grants of $200. Incorporations in this period often were combinations of library associations, mechanics', and farmers' institutes. In 1858, when a review by the Agriculture Department received only 41 replies in Canada West, legislative votes of supply were reduced to $140 per institute and then eliminated completely after 1859.[7] In the parliamentary debate on estimates, many MPs indicated that mechanics' institutes were not achieving their goals or were less valuable than agricultural societies that were providing reading materials to their members in some localities. No legislative grants were distributed in the Province of Canada after 1859 except to major organizations (e.g., Canadian Institute in Toronto), and subsequent appeals for financial assistance were not successful in the early 1860s.[8] As a result, many institutes and associations closed their doors, and even established institutes and groups were in difficult straits, such as Hamilton.[9] For example, of the 20 older institutes that first received grants under the 1851 legislation, 15 reported holdings of 16,997 volumes in 1858. However, after Confederation, when the Ontario government revived the system of local institutes by reintroducing matching $200 grants for evening classes and books, only seven of the original 20 responded by reporting 15,357 volumes (Table 1). Overall, the 1868 Ontario survey of about 80 surviving institutes elicited 22 replies, reporting holdings of 28,057. Of these, only 13, mostly older, established institutes in larger urban centres, qualified for grants.[10]

Table 1: Mechanics' Institutes and Library Associations, 1858-1868

1851 locality receiving grant in 1858	1858 reported vols	1868 grant	1868 reported vols	Notes
Belleville	420			formed 1851; closed c. 1860; re-established in 1876
Brantford	1,236	x	1,544	est. 1835-37 by Charles Duncombe; revived in 1840
Brockville	800			est. 1844
Cobourg	387	x	910	1836 petition to Legislative Assembly by F.S. Clench and 68 others
Goderich	717			
Guelph	2,018			Farmers' and Mechanics' Institute, formed 1850
Hamilton	1,129			Hamilton and Gore Mechanics' Institute, est. 1839
Kingston		x	nr	Mechanics' Institute est. 1834
London				c. 1833; petition to Legislative Assembly by Richard Murphy & co. in 1836; re-established 1841
Niagara	922			Mechanics' Institute, est. 1848
Ottawa	1,252	x	1,170	est. 1847-49; Mechanics' Institute & Athenaeum; reorganized 1853
Perth	689			Reported 1858 but not listed in 1858 accounts to receive grant
Picton	561			est. 1846; operated intermittently
Simcoe		x	104	
St. Catharines	1,136			became a mechanics' institute in 1857
St. Thomas	900			
Toronto	3,782	x	7,430	Mechanics' Institute est. 1830
Toronto		x	3,000	Canadian Institute founded 1849
Whitby		x	1,199	Mechanics' Institute est. 1852
Woodstock	1,048			subscription library est. 1836; merged with MI in 1852
Totals	16,997		15, 357	

Note: In Ontario, 34 MIs & LAs reported in 1858, but only 22 reported in 1868.

Because there were difficulties providing circulating libraries to a growing population in Canada West through voluntary action, during the decade 1858-1868 the concept of providing resources free of charge, outside of Ryerson's system, attracted some comment. In 1857, the Board of Arts and Manufactures was instituted to oversee mechanics' institutes through the Commissioner of Agriculture; it was also mandated to form a "free library of reference". This collection moved to the Toronto Mechanics' Institute, where non-members could consult it without charge.[11] In December 1862, a Toronto grand jury recommended that the City fund a public library as a valuable service for residents but recognized the reluctance of municipal officials to do so in the current state of affairs: "…we think unanimously and earnestly, that the city should entertain the project of granting some aid to a library, the property of the city."[12] The jurors suggested that the Canadian Institute might form an appropriate basis for a free public reference library. Two years later, the creation of a "circulating library" on a subscription basis for the entire province containing books useful for mechanics, engineers, decorators and artists was proposed, but failed to come to fruition.[13] In most large communities, mechanics' institutes remained the primary sources of reading materials for public use during the 1860s despite repeated claims by Ryerson that his system of public libraries supplied through schools was satisfying public demand.

In fact, contemporary statistical evidence indicates that Ryerson's system was less successful in urban places than the formation of public libraries by other means. Although the Education Office's annual tabulations stopped detailing libraries in urban places after 1862, this last report reveals that, in communities with more than 5,000 people (based on census returns in 1861-1862) there were 26 "other" public libraries – mostly subscription and mechanics' institutes – holding 59,860 volumes, compared with 14 libraries supplied by Ryerson's depository system, holding 14,189 books. In smaller centres, the disparity was less, but Ryerson's system still lagged behind (Table 2). The number of "other public libraries" tabulated by Ryerson's staff no doubt included collections in literary societies, small colleges or academies, Young Men's Christian Associations, and other local organizations that William J. Rhees had recorded across the northern British provinces in his *Manual of Public Libraries, Institutions, and Societies* (published at Philadelphia in 1859). Overall, as Table 2 shows, it was the rural school sections and townships that benefited most from the Superintendent's 1850 library legislation.[14]

Table 2: Public Libraries in Urban Centres, 1862

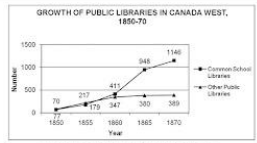
Place (5,000+ population) in Canada West	Common school libraries	Common school volumes	Other public libraries	Other public volumes
Belleville – 6,227			1	900
Brantford – 6,251	1	42	1	1,150
Cobourg – 4,975	3	1,183	3	1,400
Guelph – 5,076	1	94	1	1,560
Hamilton – 19,096	1	2,725	4	6,129
Kingston – 13,745	2	2,382	2	2,800
London – 11,555	2	1,427	2	2,500
Ottawa – 14,669			1	1,600
St. Catharines – 6,284			1	400
Toronto – 44,821	4	6,336	9	41,421
Totals – 5000+ population	14	14,189	26	59,860
Totals – less than 5,000 pop.	42	11,399	75	41,612
Totals – 91 places (pop. 214, 826)	56	25,588	101	101, 472
Totals – counties & townships	492	173,260	268	65,412
Totals – all localities	548	198,848	369	166,884

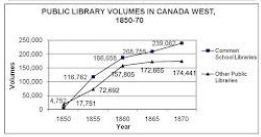
The expansion of Ryerson's library system by locality and number of books distributed in the 1860s (see the two charts in this article) occurred mostly in rural settlements where voluntary libraries or farmers' institutes were difficult to sustain. The preference in urban centres for incorporating under the 1851 legislation was evident before an influential British report on education by James Fraser criticized the concept of Ryerson's small book collections in common schools and pointed to the successful emergence of English city free libraries and the Boston Public Library.[15] It was this legislative trend that Alexander Morris directed attention to, one intended for more populous municipalities with adequate tax bases. From the mid- 1860s, Ryerson and his depository system usually emphasized the distribution of prize books to students and acknowledged that fewer free public school libraries were being formed. For example, Ryerson reported that, in Belleville in early 1866, a request by the Board of Trade to encourage school trustees to establish a public school library had been rejected.[16] His depository continued to supply many Ontario libraries, but opponents assailed his "monopoly" in the book trade and sought to reduce his power.[17]

To develop new legislation suited to changing needs in larger Canadian communities and to redress the deficiencies of the 1851 Act and Ryerson's education legislation, Morris and his staff could refer to the original American state acts or the British public library act and its subsequent revisions, which William Ewart had steered through Parliament. The need for a public meeting, a two-thirds majority of ratepayers, the frugal halfpenny rate, the population limitation, the ownership of land or buildings, and a library committee of not more than nine trustees were all features of British library legislation suited to a rapidly increasing number of incorporated municipalities in the new province of Ontario. There was also resemblance to library laws in the New England states: the permissive nature of the legislation, the required public meeting, the rate limitation, semi-independent library boards, and the power to hold land or erect buildings.

One distinguishing feature of Morris's bill was his outright preference for an elected, independent board of citizens and donors operating within the context of local self-governing communities. Enabling provisions, the limited power to raise tax money, and the semi-autonomous status of library boards were to become familiar hallmarks of public library legislation in Ontario in succeeding generations. Morris also attempted to accommodate the role of important benefactors. Three board positions were reserved for donors, who would be selected at regular intervals by other contributors. In the United States, social libraries bequeathed for public use, such as the Astor Library in New York, were in evidence, and the possibility of endowments was perhaps attractive to Morris. However, similar philanthropic efforts did not materialize in Ontario in the late 19th century, as a result, Morris' proposals in this regard were abandoned.

In summary, Morris likely sought to weld the voluntary aspects of earlier Canadian social libraries with the emerging authority of municipal government that Ryerson had drawn upon in his educational statutes.





Unlike William Boulton's republican-style "copycat" bill in 1852, Morris' bill was more thoughtful, nuanced, and creative. Further, it could co-exist with Ryerson's system and voluntary social libraries, such as mechanics' institutes and association libraries. But its appearance came at a time when the Province of Canada was absorbed by the end of reciprocity with the United States, troublesome Fenian raids, demanding preparations for a conference in London to finalize the BNA Act, and federal elections scheduled for 1867. Morris' bill suffered the same unkind fate as did William Boulton's in 1852-53: it was discharged and forgotten in the short term.[14] Nevertheless, the die had been cast twice: both Conservative parliamentarians were confident in the power of local self-government – especially in the increasing number of smaller urban centres emerging across southern Ontario – to create and maintain library services. Although they differed on the details, the concepts they introduced in the pre-Confederation era were not isolated from changing contemporary perceptions about the management of services associated with "public libraries" or "free libraries". A generation later, in 1882, these liberal-democratic ideas were safeguarded in the landmark Ontario library legislation that prepared the foundation for 20th-century public library expansion.

Lorne Bruce is the head of Archival and Special Collections at the University of Guelph Library. – Ed.

Notes

1 An original print of the bill is not available in the National Archives and was not in the Parliamentary Library that was being formed at Ottawa in 1865. However, John George Hodgins reproduced its text in the 19th volume of his *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1907), pp. 207-210. I was not able to find his copy in files on the Documentary History of Education at the Ontario Archives in the early 1990s, but hopefully an original copy will be located.

2 *Odessa Times*, August 2, 1866, p. 2 and *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette*, August 31, 1866, p. 2. *The Herald* doubted that the taxing powers of the trustees would prove popular in Montreal.

3 See *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada from June 8 to August 15, 1866* (Ottawa: Desbarats & Cary, 1866), pp. 263 and 303.

4 Annual report delivered March 6, 1867 on Ottawa Mechanics' Institute, *Journal of the Board of Arts and Manufactures for Upper Canada [JBAMUC]* (Toronto: W.C. Chewett, 1867), vol. 7, p. 98.

5 For Morris' life and career, see *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), vol. 11, pp. 608-15. For an earlier discussion of the 1866 bill, see Lorne Bruce, *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), pp. 37-38.

6 Enacted August 10,1866, The Public Libraries Amendment Act, 29 and 30 Victoriae Cap. 114.

7 For the 1858 survey results, see *Reports of the Minister of Agriculture and the Chief Emigrant Agent for Canada*, 1857 (Toronto: J. Lovell, 1858), introduction and 3-page tabulation (unpaged).

8 For struggles of the institutes and associations, see *Free Books for All*, pp. 15-20.

9 "Hamilton and Gore Mechanics' Institute," *JBAMUC*, vol. 4 (1864), pp. 77-79.

10 Survey results in Appendix 5 of *The Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Arts of the Province of Ontario for the Year 1868* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose), pp. 143-45.

11 Its catalogue of books and information about it appear in the *JBAMUC*, vol. 1 (1861), pp. 234-39.

12 *Toronto Globe*, November 1, 1862, p. 2.

13 "Circulating Library," *JBAMUC*, vol. 4 (1864), pp. 133-34.

14 Gordon Stables, *The Role of Egerton Ryerson in the Development of Public Library Service in Ontario* (Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1966) remains the standard history.

15 James Fraser, *Report ... on the Common School System of the United States and of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1866), pp. 273-77. Fraser conducted his travels in 1865.

16 "Public School Library in Belleville," *Journal of Education, Upper Canada* 19 (March 1866), p. 39.

17 George L. Parker, "Egerton Ryerson and the Ontario Book Trade in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Signum 2* (January 1975), pp. 21-38; and Linda Wilson Corman, "James Campbell and the Ontario Education Department: 1858-1884," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 14 (1975), pp. 17-52 provide summaries of Ryerson's conflicts, ones he seldom tried to avoid.

18 There are echoes of Morris' bill in "Public Libraries in England," *Journal of Education, Upper Canada* 20 (June 1867), pp. 103-04, reprinted from the *Toronto Telegraph*, referring to most of Morris' provisions yet attributing them to another parliamentary member from North Wentworth (near Hamilton). ∎

Bill: An Act to Authorize the Formation of Free Libraries

[Mr. Alexander Morris, read a second time on 7 August 1866 and then discharged]

Whereas it is expedient to grant facilities for the establishment of Free Public Libraries; Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly of Canada, enacts as follows

1. The Mayor of the Municipality of any City, or Town, in Canada containing by the Census made next before the Meeting mentioned in this Section, not fewer than five thousand inhabitants, or any two Justices of the Peace for the locality embracing such City, or Town, but resident in such City, or Town, each possessed of Real Estate in such City, or Town, assessed at the value of , may at any time call a Public Meeting of the owners of Real Estate in the said City, or Town, in order to determine whether this Act shall be used and adopted with a view to the forming and maintaining a Free Public Library in such City, or Town, and ten days' notice at least of the time, place and object of the Meeting shall be given by advertising the said Meeting in at least one Newspaper published in such City, or Town, for at least ten days preceding the day appointed for the Meeting; and, if at any such Meeting two-thirds of the said Owners of Real Estate present at such Meeting so determine, then this Act shall forthwith be used, adopted and acted upon.

2. If any Meeting so called, as aforesaid, to determine whether this Act shall be used, or adopted, shall determine in the negative, then no Meeting for a similar purpose shall be held for the space of one year, at least, from the time of holding the previous Meeting.

3. Whenever any such Meeting shall be convened the Mayor, or, in his absence, the said Justice of the Peace present at such Meeting, shall preside, and shall make, or cause to be made, a Minute of the Resolutions passed at such Meeting, and shall sign the same; and the said Minute shall then be deposited in the Office of the Registrar of the County, or Registration division within which the said City, or Town, may be, by the Chairman of the said Meeting, who shall make oath as to the authenticity of such Minute, before the said Registrar, and the Resolutions, so signed, shall be conclusive evidence that the Meeting was duly convened, and the vote thereat duly taken, and that the Minute contains a true account of the proceedings at the said Meeting.

4. The said Minute and affidavit shall continue and remain in the keeping of the said Registrar, who shall give certified copies of the same to any one requiring them, on payment of a fee of one dollar, and any copy so certified shall be *primâ facie* evidence of the contents of the said Minute and affidavit in all legal proceedings.

5. Immediately upon its being decided at any such Meeting that this Act shall he used and adopted, and a Free Public Library formed in such City, or Town, the owners of Real Estate in the said City, or Town, shall become a Body Corporate by the name of "The Free Library of the City, or Town, of, (as the case may be)[ ]" and by that name may sue and be sued, and hold and dispose of Lands and immovable property in the said City, or Town, required for the purposes of their incorporation, and use a Common Seal.

6. The affairs of the said Corporation shall be conducted by nine Trustees, six of whom shall be elected by the Ratepayers from among themselves, and three by those who have made donations to the Corporation of Books, or money, to the value of at least each. The first six Trustees shall be elected at the Meeting at which the adoption of this Act has been decided on, and after the two-thirds vote for such adoption has been taken; and the three Trustees to be appointed by the donors may be appointed by them at any time within one month after the election of the said first six Trustees, by Memorandum in writing signed by four-fifths of such Donors, and delivered to the said first six Trustees, or at a Meeting convened for the purpose, by any one of such six Trustees, of which three days previous notice shall be given by advertisement, of in a Newspaper.

7. An Annual Meeting of the Ratepayers, and an Annual Meeting of the Donors then living, shall be held in each and every Year in the same month as the month in which the Meeting was held at which it was decided to adopt this Act. Any one of the existing Trustees elected by the Ratepayers, and chosen by the Meeting, shall preside at the Annual Meeting of the Ratepayers, and any one of the existing Trustees elected by the Donors and chosen by the Meeting, shall

preside at the Annual Meeting of the Donors. Two of the Trustees elected by the Ratepayers, and selected by ballot at the Annual Meeting of the Ratepayers, shall go out of office each year, and their places be supplied by two new Trustees to be elected by the Ratepayers at such Meeting, but the out-going Trustees may be re-elected as such new Trustees. One of the Trustees elected by the Donors, and selected by ballot at the Annual Meeting of the Donors, shall go out each year, and his place be supplied by one new Trustee to be elected by the Donors at such Meeting, but such out-going Trustee may be re-elected as such new Trustee.

8. A majority of the Trustees for the time being shall constitute a quorum, and the Trustees for the time being shall have all the powers of the entire body of Trustees, notwithstanding that, at any time, there may be no Trustees elected by the Donors, or the death, absence, or incapacity of any one, or more, of the Trustees.

9. If, from any cause whatever, the Annual Meetings shall not be held at the time provided by this Act, or the Trustees shall, from any cause whatever, not be elected at such Annual Meeting, the said Corporation shall not be thereby dissolved, but a new Meeting shall be called in the same manner as an Annual Meeting, at which, if necessary, such election may be had; and the Trustees for the time being shall retain their office and powers until their Successors, or the Successors of any one of them, shall be duly elected.

10. The Trustees shall meet at least once in every calendar month, and at such other times as they think fit, at the Library or some other convenient place, and any one Trustee may summon a Special Meeting of the Trustees by giving three clear days' notice in writing to each Trustee, specifying therein the purpose for which the Meeting is called, and no business shall be transacted at any Meeting of the Trustees unless at least a majority shall be present.

11. All orders and proceedings of the Trustees shall be entered in Books to be kept by them for that purpose, and shall be signed by the Trustees, or any two of them, and all such orders and proceedings so entered and purporting to be signed, shall be deemed to be original orders and proceedings, and such Books may be produced and read as evidence of all such orders and proceedings upon any judicial proceedings whatever.

12. The Trustees shall keep distinct and regular Accounts of their Receipts, Payments, Credits and Liabilities, which Accounts shall be audited yearly, by two Auditors, not being Trustees, elected by the Ratepayers at each Annual Meeting of the Ratepayers. The Auditors, so appointed, shall report to the Trustees as soon as practicable, and such Report shall be open to the inspection of any Ratepayer, or Donor, at all reasonable hours.

13. The said Trustees shall have the power to levy, for the purposes of the Library annually, a tax, not exceeding one-half cent. In the dollar, on all rateable Real property within the City, or Town, where they are elected, and the

value of such rateable Real property shall be estimated for the purpose of such Tax, according to the Assessment, or Valuation Rolls, made by the Municipality of the said City, or Town, in the year next preceding the levying of the said Rate by the said Trustees. Such Tax may be levied and recovered from the Owners of the said Real property in the same manner and by the same means as are used for the levying and recovering of any other Rate, Tax, or Assessment, levied, or leviable, in the said City, or Town for the purposes of the City, or Town, Municipality, and such Tax shall, if unpaid, be a special charge and mortgage on such Real property, not requiring registration to preserve it.

14. The said Trustees may establish and maintain Free Reading Rooms in connection with, and as a part of, such Free Libraries, and, from time to time, purchase and provide the necessary fuel, lighting, and other similar matters, Books, Newspapers and Maps, for the use of the said Libraries and Reading Rooms, and cause the same to be bound and repaired when necessary.

15. The said Trustees may purchase and acquire Land in the City, or Town in the name of the Corporation, for the erection of a Library Building, and may mortgage the same at any time to procure funds for the erection, improvement, or repair thereof, or for the payment of any debt secured upon the same.

16. The said Trustees shall elect from among themselves, from time to time, a President, and shall appoint such subordinate Officers as they deem expedient, prescribe their remuneration and duties, and dismiss them, and shall, from time to time, make Rules and Regulations for the management of the said Library, not contrary to this Act, and may allow the Householders and Inhabitants to borrow and take away Books from the Library, on such terms and conditions, and under such restrictions, as the Trustees may think fit to impose.

17. The said Trustees may establish Fines for the infraction of any Rules and Regulations, to be recoverable by them as in an action of debt

18. The said Libraries shall be open to the Public free of charge, but any one whom the Trustees may consider to have contravened any Rule, or Regulation, may be excluded therefrom.

19. The word "Ratepayer," whenever used in this Act, shall be construed to mean the Owner of Real Property within the City, or Town, whose property is assessed for the purposes of this Act, and the word "Donor," to mean any one who has given to the said Corporation, in Books, or money a sum not less than dollars. The word "City," shall apply to any Municipality called in any Statute a City in Upper Canada, or Lower Canada; and the word "Town," shall apply to any incorporated Town in Upper Canada, and to any incorporated Town, or local Municipality in Lower Canada.

20. This Act shall be deemed a Public Act.

Saturday, October 21, 2017

Willliam Henry Boulton's 1852 Public Libraries Bill: Canadian Pre-Confederation Library Legislation

My article on proposed public library legislation for the Province of Canada (now Ontario and Quebec) in 1852. The bill was essentially identical to the public library act passed by the American state of Massachusetts in the previous year, 1851. It was not read a third time and died at the end of the parliamentary session. Originally published in *Ex Libris Association Newsletter* 42 (Fall 2007): 15-18.

The bill was introduced by William Henry Boulton, the Conservative member for Toronto in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. Boulton had also served as Mayor of Toronto from 1845-1846. Boulton's biography is at the Dictionary of Canadian Biography website at this link.

The Bill, numbered 75 for the session of the 4th Parliament of the United Canadas, was premature free public library legislation. At the time of its first reading only a handful of municipal corporations had been formed in Upper Canada (Canada West). Lower Canada (Canada East) had no general municipal legislation. Further, in the previous year an act had been passed by the Canadian Parliament to permit the formation of library associations and mechanics' institutes. As well, Egerton Ryerson was establishing public libraries in rural townships and small communities across Upper Canada, mostly in school houses.

The text of Bill 75, virtually a copy of an American state law, is included.

By clicking on the page, the article can be read in a web browser.

The Public Libraries Bill, 1852

BY LORNE BRUCE

At the mid-point of the 19th century, the concept of public libraries in Ontario (known as Upper Canada or Canada West before 1867) began to undergo a major transition. Prior to 1850, public libraries, often referred to by library historians as "social libraries", generally were accepted to be collections of books available to groups or individuals on a fee-paying, membership basis. Children and women normally were excluded unless provisions allowed their participation. There were many early 19th century variants of the Canadian "public library":

- mechanics' institutes that supplied instruction, public lectures, and libraries to improve workingmen's education;
- library associations offering reference and circulating collections for use by proprietors or subscribers;
- athenaeums, i.e., literary, scientific, or artistic groups forming a library for members that featured current magazines and newspapers;
- literary societies or book clubs forming libraries or providing book exchanges for members;
- agricultural societies – some developed rural libraries, exchanged books, and circulated newspapers (e.g., farmers' institutes);
- mercantile libraries for the use of business clerks, bookkeepers, etc.;
- subscription libraries for members paying an annual or monthly fee;
- library company, i.e., libraries that members contributed money for a book stock and paid an annual fee to use;
- scientific societies forming libraries for members' interest in science or engineering.[1]

In addition, numerous Sunday school libraries for children and adolescents supplied an essential fourth "R" in Victorian education – religion.[2] These libraries, together with small text collections in common and grammar schools, had begun to appear earlier in the 1820s following a decision to authorize district school boards to use legislative money to a maximum £100 for books (56 Geo. III, c. 36, s. 12) in 1816.

The growth of social libraries and school collections before 1850 kept pace with the development of early Victorian communities. With the passage of the Municipal Corporations Act (Baldwin Act) in 1849 and the restructuring of the educational system by Egerton Ryerson after 1850, came an opportunity to strengthen and standardize libraries. From 1841, it was not uncommon for the Province of Canada to provide financial support for both school collections and for social libraries. In Upper Canada, Ryerson attempted to combine these types: his 1846 *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instructions* emphasized the need for general circulating libraries for students and adults in school sections; central lists for books and regulatory control of library operations; as well as local voluntary community efforts to establish libraries through existing municipal councils and school boards.[3]

In 1850, Ryerson included libraries in the Common School Act (13 & 14 Vic., c. 48) that established a system of free public libraries for children and adults as follows:

- general public libraries run by municipalities operating under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1849, i.e., townships, villages, towns, cities, and counties;
- teachers' libraries (a public occupational type);
- common school libraries for students and ratepayers and their families;
- libraries in government public institutions, e.g., asylums and penitentiaries.

Ryerson considered common school libraries to be "free public libraries" as they were established by statute, tax supported, freely accessible, administered by public bodies, and received funding from the colonial legislature. In his annual reports, he collected statistical evidence to show the progress of these libraries and also included "other public libraries" (i.e., social libraries) and "Sunday school libraries" serving the growing population. During the 1850s, his system of libraries, supported with matching book grants of £3,500 annually from his Education Office, expanded rapidly but thereafter encountered opposition from people and politicians who did not accept his regulations or prescription for reading.[4]

One year after Ryerson's school act established rate-supported public libraries, Robert Bell steered another act for the "Incorporation and Better Management of Library Associations and Mechanics' Institutes" (14 & 15 Vic., c. 86) through a parliamentary session held in Toronto. Bell was obviously interested in libraries: he had suggested using a liquor tax to support the development of school libraries, he possessed his own private library, and he was active in his home town as a member of the Carleton Place Library Association and Mechanics' Institute.[5] His 1851 act allowed groups of not less than 10 persons holding £25 to sign a declaration to form an institute or association. No grants from the legislature were provided by legislation but normally parliament voted amounts for public incorporated bodies in the 1850s, usually $200 per year. By 1857, the number of grant supported institutes and associations had risen to more than 140 in Canada East and West. As a consequence of the two acts in 1850-51, the legislative framework for library development in mechanics' institutes, library associations, and common school libraries was well established. Ryerson had combined American ideas about school-district public libraries with existing government public funding for school texts and books. Bell's provisions regularized voluntary incorporation for institutes and library associations that had begun to proliferate in the 1840s.

By clicking on the page, the article can be read in a web browser.

Surprisingly, then, in the fall session of parliament at Quebec in September 1852, another library act was advanced by a Conservative member for Toronto, William Henry Boulton.[6] Boulton (1812-74) had practiced as a lawyer prior to his successful campaigns for a Toronto seat in the House of Assembly in the elections of 1844, 1848, and 1851. As well, he served as mayor of Toronto from 1845 to 1847 and was well acquainted with Toronto's social and municipal life, often hosting prominent persons, such as Governor-General Lord Elgin, at his residence, the Grange.[7] As a traditional Tory connected with the Family Compact, he was staunch defender of the rights of the Church of England in Canada. Yet Boulton also displayed a populist strain: he cultivated support from the Orange Order in Toronto and he eventually became deputy grand master for British North America. After passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill by the Canadian parliament in 1849, Boulton realized traditional Tory strength had dissipated and he began advocating republican, American style innovations. One ill-advised effort was a draft 1850 bill for a new constitution that advocated an elective Legislative Council (the upper house of parliament), provided the governor general with veto powers, set fixed election periods, and allowed for impeachment.[8]

We do not know what motivated Boulton to introduce his library bill aside from his republican leanings. He was genuinely interested in books and libraries, being active in the newly-formed Toronto Athenaeum (1843) that incorporated in 1848 (11 Vic., c. 16) for the purpose of forming a public library and museum. This dual concept became more fashionable after a few English communities used the Museums Act passed by the British Parliament in 1845 to establish publicly supported libraries. On March 26, 1846, Boulton petitioned the government, as mayor of Toronto, to transfer duplicate books from the Legislative Library to the Athenaeum "for the benefit of the citizens", partly in compensation for loss of usage of these books by the public after the legislature moved to Montreal. A Standing Committee weighed his request and reported, on May 22, 1847, that duplicates should be divided between Toronto and Quebec which had also been a home for the legislature for a short time.[9] On June 23, 1847, the House approved the transfer to the Athenaeum and the Quebec Library Association after Boulton raised the issue before the session ended. In spite of this action, the Athenaeum's goals never came to fruition – it, in turn, transferred most of its assets to the Canadian Institute after 1853 and became a news room.

We have better knowledge about why Boulton's legislation failed. The Legislative Assembly Journal for September 20, 1852 records "Ordered, That Mr. Boulton have leave to bring in a Bill to authorize Cities and Towns to establish and maintain Public Libraries. He accordingly presented the said Bill to the House, and the same was received and read for the first time; and ordered to be read a second time on Monday next [27 September]." In fact, second reading was considerably delayed. It was five months before the assembly reconsidered the proposal on February 24, 1853: "The Order of the day for the second reading of the Bill to authorize Cities and Towns to establish and maintain Public Libraries, being read: Ordered, That the said Order be discharged." Normally, second reading would constitute passage by the House and lead to Royal Assent provided it received the "double majority", i.e. a reasonable support from members in both Canada East and Canada West. This practice, normally used for bills effecting both sections of the Province possibly was one source of delay considering the absence of general legislation in Canada East before 1855 to allow the creation of municipalities corresponding to parishes within counties (18 Vic., c. 100) and the reluctance of Canada East to fund and provide free public libraries in schools or municipalities at this time.[10] Another impediment was an outbreak of cholera that interrupted the parliamentary session. But the most serious setback was Boulton's uncertain status – his 1851 election came under review in October 1852 due to the necessity for a £500 property qualification. Boulton was engaged in defending his position, as it was common knowledge that he had suffered financial distress in dealings with his former Toronto law partners. Eventually, a Select Committee appointed to inquire into his financial standing reported on March 29, 1853 that he lacked the requisite property qualification. As a result, Boulton's election was void and his seat vacated. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the library bill did not progress.

The text of the 1852 bill was not revealed until it was digitized in 2004 for the Early Canadiana Online project. Many unsuccessful bills from the early period of the Province of Canada had perished in fires and early researchers, such as John George Hodgins, had not been able to retrieve a copy.[11] After my own unsuccessful search, I speculated in 1994 that perhaps it was short in length and included permissive provisions based on American state legislation and the 1850 Public Libraries Act adopted in Britain.[12] From its text, it is evident that Boulton, with his legal education and close family ties to Boston (he married Harriette Munn Dixon there in 1846), copied almost verbatim the entire contents of the Massachusetts public library act issued in 1851. Why did he introduce it? Perhaps he was following his political republican tendencies. Perhaps he was establishing legislation that might be used to realize the Athenaeum's program of a public library in Toronto. Lacking further information, what we can do gainfully is examine the text:

> An Act to authorize Cities and Towns to establish and maintain Public Libraries.
> Be it enacted, &c.,
> That any City or Town in the Province

Duty/Power	Ryerson's Common School Act [amended 1853 with Regulations]	1851 Act [amended 1856]	Boulton: 1852 Public Library Bill
Incorporation	all municipal bodies, school boards and township sections empowered to establish libraries	requires declaration of minimum of ten persons holding £25	councils of cities and towns
Formation of library	according to Municipal Corporation Act 1849 for municipalities (bylaws) and for school trustees normally public meeting with vote & township bylaw	file declaration with county registrar including name, purpose, trustees, mode of succession, admission of new members, bylaws, etc.	local bylaws
Governance	elected municipal or school body establishing library (e.g. villages)	board of directors or trustees elected at annual meetings by membership	board of five trustees appointed by municipality
Management	Librarian appointed to manage collections & annual report by School Inspector to Ryerson	officers, e.g. president, librarian, treasurer, secretary, etc. elected at annual meetings by members	
Purpose	"school libraries for general reading"	"ordinary and usual business" of MI or LA	"maintain a public library" (including branches) and suitable rooms"
Public access	"each individual residing in a school section, of sufficient age to read the books … shall be entitled to all the benefits and privileges … relative to libraries"	subscribed members	residents may use according to regulations
Finance	£3,500 available annually from legislature to match local expenditures for books selected from Education Office's catalogue	*MI & LA eligible for legislative grants [practice — not in act, revoked in 1858]*	5 shillings ($1) for each householder for establishment and 1 shilling & 3 pence (25¢) per year thereafter
Property	assets exempt from taxation	1851: limit to £100; amended in 1856; places over 3,000 pop. £500 in holdings, under 3,000 pop. £250 in holdings	may receive bequests and donations

is hereby authorized and empowered to establish and maintain a Public Library within the same, with or without branches, for the use of the inhabitants thereof, and to provide suitable rooms therefore, under such regulations for the government of such Library as may from time to time be prescribed by a Board of five persons, to be named annually by the Municipal Authorities of such City or Town.

II. Any City or Town may appropriate for the foundation and commencement of such Library as aforesaid, a sum not exceeding five shillings for each of its householders in the year next preceding that in which such appropriation shall be made, and may also appropriate annually, for the maintenance and increase of such Library, a sum not exceeding one shilling and three pence for each of its householders in the year next preceding that in which such appropriation shall be made.

III. Any City or Town may receive, in its corporate capacity, and hold and manage any devise, bequest or donation for the establishment, increase or maintenance of a Public Library within the same.[12]

Unlike British legislation that limited free libraries to municipalities over 10,000 population, established a ½ penny rate (12 pence in a shilling), and required assent of ⅔ majority of ratepayers in a special poll, this American-style legislation was relatively generous in terms of establishment and financing. It also permitted municipalities to accept collections or money from individuals or organizations. Unlike Ryerson's

library system, there were no terms for legislative funding and no governmental regulations. Notably, the bill followed American precedent by establishing the board form of governance, a feature absent in British cities.

In retrospect, Boulton's introduction of specific legislation for municipal public libraries in cities and towns was ill-timed and lacked general support, a feature of some of his other legislative manoeuverings. On balance, his library bill was premature for there were only two dozen eligible places in Canada West when his libraries could be established with Toronto, Hamilton and Kingston being the principal urban centers. As well, his "facsimile legislation" did not address any flaws or oversights in the legislative provisions of Ryerson or Bell, aside from the acceptance of donations. Canadian parliamentarians could be reasonably satisfied that public libraries, either free or membership, were adequately provided for. A table comparing the two acts and Boulton's bill summarizes the various positions with regard to public libraries. In terms of mid-century, liberal-democratic ideas on governance, Boulton's bill perceives local-central political relations to be autonomous with little or no overlap or joint activity, as in the case of 1851 legislation for voluntary associations. Ryerson's legislation was more attuned to the general liberal preference for a functional partnership between local-central bodies with the central power instructing/encouraging and the local government providing service. This consensus became one of the hallmarks of the Canadian "Liberal state" in late 19th and early 20th century.[13] Both Ryerson, whose system of libraries was dismantled in the late 1870s, and Boulton had a common basis of action, the power of government. This liberal faith inspired important concepts that would eventually gain wider acceptance: the use of taxation for libraries, the use of legislation to standardize collections (e.g., the fiction issue), and free community access to libraries by all residents.

In terms of its historical relevance, the 1852 bill is an early acknowledgement that our modern (i.e., late 19th and early 20th century) concept of the public library was conceived in the pre-Confederation era. Anglo-American influences were implanted well in advance of the usual historical marshalling point, passage of the Ontario Free Libraries Act in 1882. The incubation stage for the modern public library in Ontario may owe less to the work of mechanics' institutes and voluntary library associations than it does to Ryerson's legislative dictates and the unsuccessful effort by William Henry Boulton. While most of Ryerson's "free public libraries" were established within the school system that he directed and influenced to a great degree, there were other forces at work at the municipal level. In fact, Boulton's attempt was only the first of two municipal library bills that appeared before Confederation. Another bill, lengthier, more nuanced, and also overlooked by library historians, was introduced by Alexander Morris in 1866 and will be the focus of my next article on the pre-Confederation period. ∎

Endnotes

[1] See Karen Smith's introduction, "Community Libraries," in *History of the Book in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 144-151.

[2] Ryerson's annual school report for 1848 reported 360 Sunday school libraries with 47,000 volumes.

[3] For a good survey of Ryerson's system, see Gordon T. Stubbs, *The Role of Egerton Ryerson in the Development of Public Library Service in Ontario* (Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1966).

[4] See B. Curtis, "Littrary merit', 'Useful Knowledge', and the Organization of Township Libraries in Canada West, 1840-1860," *Ontario History* 78 (1986): 285-311 for opposing views.

[5] Robert Bell, "Township School Libraries – Means of Establishing Them," *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* 5 (1850): 81; and Courtney C. J. Bond, "Robert Bell," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1990), vol. 12, p. 85.

[6] See, Heyward Senior, "William Henry Boulton," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, (Toronto, Univ. of Toronto, 1972), vol. 10, pp. 80-81.

[7] See John Lownsbrough, *The Privileged Few: the Grange and its People in Nineteenth-Century Toronto* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 1980), pp. 98-115.

[8] See J. L. McNairn, "Publius of the North: Tory Republicanism and the American Constitution in Upper Canada, 1848-54," *Canadian Historical Review* 77, (1996): 522-524.

[9] *Report* printed in *Appendix to the fifth volume of the journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada… 30th day of March to the 9th day of June, 1846…* (Montreal: G. Desbarats & T. Cary 1847), "Appendix CC."

[10] See Marcel Lajeunesse, "Meilleur, Chauveau, and Libraries in Mid-Nineteenth Century Quebec," *Journal of Library History* 18 (1983): 255-73 for this period.

[11] J.G. Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada from 1791 to 1876* (Toronto: Warwick & Rutter, 1894-1910), vol. 10, p. 102 (published in 1902).

[12] See L. Bruce, *Free Books for All: the Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), pp. 36-37.

[13] *Bill no. 75 : An act to authorize cities and towns to establish and maintain public libraries*, 1st Session, 4th Parliament, 16 Victoria, 1852. Quebec : [J. Lovell, 1852]. The Act was also printed for Lower Canada *to Acte pour autoriser les cités et villes du Haut-Canada à établir et maintenir des bibliothèques publiques.*

[14] For a historiographic overview see Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework," *Canadian Historical Review* 81 (2000): 617-645. For the liberal mindset shaping the 1882 library act and subsequent growth, see my article "Public Libraries in Ontario, 1882-1920," Ontario History 77 (1985): 123-149.

Lorne Bruce is the head of Archival and Special Collections at the University of Guelph Library.

This article was printed as submitted.–Ed.

BILL [75] -- 1st Session, 4th Parliament of the Province of Canada, 16 Victoria, 1852

An Act to authorize Cities and Towns to establish and maintain Public Libraries.

Be it enacted, &c.,

That any City or Town in this Province is hereby authorized and empowered to establish and maintain a Public Library within the same, with or without branches, for the use of the inhabitants thereof, and to provide suitable rooms there or, under such regulations for the government of such Library as may from time to time be prescribed by a Board of five persons, to be named annually by the Municipal Authorities of such City or Town.

II. Any City or Town may appropriate for the foundation and commencement of such Library as aforesaid, a sum not exceeding five shillings for each of its householders in the year next preceding that in which such appropriation shall be made, and may also appropriate annually, for the maintenance and increase of such Library, a sum not exceeding one shilling and three pence for each of its householders in the year next preceding that in which such appropriation shall be made.

III. Any City or Town may receive, in its corporate capacity, and hold and manage any devise, bequest or donation for the establishment, increase or maintenance of a Public Library within the same.